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Saints manager Claude aiming to end first season at St Mary's on a big high ...



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SAINTS



Harry just 'unique'

Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino hailed Harry Kane's uniqueness and professionalism as the England striker closes in on a second straight Golden Boot.

The 23-year-old is in pole position to be the Premier League's top scorer for the second term in a row, having moved onto 26 - two ahead of Everton's Romelu Lukaku - with a four-goal haul in Thursday's 6-1 rout at Leicester.

Spurs finish an impressive season at relegated Hull on Sunday, with second place behind champions Chelsea already secure.

Pochettino has been highly impressed by the progress and consistency of his forward, who led the way with 25 top-flight goals last term and has scored 70 goals in his last 90 league outings.

"It is difficult to find another striker like him in the world," the Argentinian said.

"The most important thing is he is more mature and a more experienced player and he is so



Mauricio Pochettino

professional."

Pochettino stressed the importance of his key players having plenty of rest over the summer.

"It's important to have good holidays and good rest for them and then good preparation to start the Premier League in the best condition," he said.

"We were talking a lot about the holidays after the international games (in June)."

Kane has 32 goals in all competitions while Son Heung-min has 21 along with midfielder Dele Alli - the first time three Spurs players have scored over 20 in a season.

Son also netted twice in the at Leicester and Pochettino reserved praise for the South Korea forward.

"He deserves a lot of credit about his goals and the performance of the team," the Spurs boss said.

"He was one of the key players in the season like Harry, like Dele, like in often situations like Christian Eriksen too.

"He was key for us during the season and in the moment when we didn't have Harry he was our main striker and he scored a lot of goals and gave us a lot of points."

Shakespeare's done an 'outstanding' job



Craig Shakespeare.

Bournemouth manager Eddie Howe feels interim boss Craig Shakespeare has done an "outstanding job" to guide Leicester through a testing spell and see them ready for another Premier League challenge next season.

The Foxes have ended the campaign safe in mid-table having at one stage looked set to be going from champions to the Championship before manager Claudio Ranieri was sacked at the end of February.

Former assistant Shakespeare has overseen an upturn in fortunes as well as take the east midlands club into the quarter-finals of the Champions League. It remains to be seen whether

Shakespeare will be given the job full time, but Howe has been impressed as he prepares to take the Cherries to Leicester for Sunday's Premier League finale.

"He (Shakespeare) has done an outstanding job," said Howe, whose own side also pulled clear of the relegation scrap after losing just two matches from the past 10.

"When he took over, they were in trouble.

"Leicester had a really tough run of fixtures, and I don't think that should be underestimated, and they were involved in the Champions League. When you have that level of tournament within your

league programme, it can be very difficult to manage the league programme while that is there.

"They did that very well and managed to pick up some big wins (in the Premier League) and now they look very comfortable in the position they are in - it is actually difficult to remember how difficult a position they were in."

Howe intends to tackle Cherries' 38th game just as any other in the Premier League this season.

"We don't want to do anything that will have too much of an effect on the team," said Howe. "We are chasing the wins and every position in the league is worth so much."

Howe: This'll take time to all sink in

Echo reporter

Bournemouth boss Eddie Howe feels his side's achievement of staying in the Premier League again will probably take some time to sink in.

The Cherries travel to Leicester for Sunday's finale safe for another campaign among the elite having eclipsed last season's tally, now on 45 points following just two defeats - against the top two - out of their last 11 matches.

Victory at the King Power Stadium coupled with results elsewhere going their way and could see Howe's side jump above south coast rivals Saints and end up as high as eighth.

It has been some rise for the south-coast club, who started the decade in League Two.

Howe, a former Cherries player, understands just how far they have come - and the continuing battles ahead to retain that hard-earned status.

"It has been a good season to this point and we want to finish on a high if we can. Our end-of-season form has been very strong," Howe said.

"The first year was tough, everything we expected it to be.

"The second season we felt would be different in many ways, potentially harder and I think that has been the case.

"I don't think there has been any surprises for us, the pitfalls of the second season have been there, but we have managed to control them and the players deserve a lot of credit for not letting standards drop.



Eddie Howe.

"The work rate has been there and the attitude has been there. When those two things have been there then we are a very difficult team to play against."

Howe added: "There have been several moments to look back on and it is difficult for me to really appreciate them in season, it is only when you sit back and reflect in the summer.

"The Liverpool games, home and away, were obviously big ones, they were special days for us, as well as beating Everton here, drawing with Tottenham here, which were not only great

results but they were excellent performances.

"The draw at Old Trafford especially in the circumstances and how that point came about was also a heroic effort from the players."

Having now established themselves in the Premier League, Bournemouth can look to bring in a calibre of player which at one time fans could only have dreamed off.

The Cherries have been linked with summer moves for Chelsea trio John Terry, Nathan Ake and goalkeeper Asmir Begovic as well

as Sunderland forward Jermain Defoe, who had a loan spell with the Bournemouth earlier in his career.

"The two years in the Premier League certainly help (attract players)," said Howe.

"The first year there is a hesitation before wanting to commit to the club because they don't just want to be a Premier League player for one season, and a lot of players have that in mind.

"The fact we have been able to stay in the Premier League for two years gives us a stronger base to appeal to those players."

SAINTS



Adam Leitch



Claude Puel believes that an eighth place finish will be an achievement for Saints as the curtain falls on an up and down campaign.

Saints enter the final game of the season at home to Stoke knowing a win will guarantee them eighth spot.

Given the strength of the top seven in this campaign, most neutrals would feel that being the 'best of the rest' would be a victory for Saints and Puel in his first season at St Mary's.

However, there is much talk that he could yet be sacked.

"For us it was a long season, and difficult, but a very interesting season," reflected Puel. "With all these games and competitions we learn a lot.

"After if we see the situation all the great teams, the great players with a strong potential finish in first place, just after seventh place is eighth place and it will be interesting for us to finish eighth on the table.

"It will be a good thing for Southampton and the squad.

"All the great teams this season are on a very good level and they get their objective of the season and it is difficult to finish more up on the table with the quality on this Premier League and these great teams.

"This last game is important for us."

Puel has attempted to fight back somewhat over speculation he could be sacked after the end of the season.

His position was hardly strengthened by Saints chairman Ralph Krueger refusing to commit to Puel remaining in charge next season, as he instead chose to admit that all footballing matters would be subject to an end of year review.

Puel, though, has clearly taken the decision to try and direct focus on to one last big effort against Stoke.

"I don't answer the question because it's not my worry," he said when asked if he was confident he would still be Saints boss next season.

"It is just to work, to make my job and other things, speculation about speculation, I don't say anything. I have no time to lose my concentration about this."

The manager also played down reports of dressing room unrest



Saints boss Claude Puel.

which have surfaced in newspapers over the last week.

"I am sorry but I didn't read this in this moment.

"I keep my conversation about the team and to prepare this last game and others things I don't want to comment about.

"I don't know what it is and it's not interesting for me.

"Just I saw good work in the training session and concentration and this is the most important for me.

"After other speculation about other things in newspapers I cannot make any comment about.

"I am satisfied about the strong work all season because it's a long season with many games.

"Sometimes it was fantastic and always they get the good attitude and the good spirit in the training session every game, sometimes

without the good reward.

"I say congratulations for all this good work all season and this is the most important.

"After the different comments I don't know where is not important for me."

Despite some negativity at the moment, there have been bright moments in the campaign, not least the Wembley appearance in the EFL Cup final.

Puel said: "Many moments when we can play a strong game with quality on the pitch, in defence and attack also it was very interesting. There were many great games I think in a long season, sometimes without the good reward.

"The identity of our game was interesting and it's important to develop all this with a clinical edge.

"It was interesting and a good memory on the final and not just the final but quality we can do on the journey of the EFL Cup, every time with a clean sheet, qualification against Sunderland, Crystal Palace, developing young players.

"After qualification away at Arsenal and the two legs against Liverpool was fantastic also.

"It is a good feeling because we saw the quality and the level of the team.

"The final was fantastic and it is a good memory and fantastic support with the fans also for this final.

"It was fantastic to see them and all this support, it was just the result was not enough.

"It was a good feeling and this shows the quality of the team and what we can do with more consistency for next season."

Hughes' big difference

Stoke boss Mark Hughes wants his team to do better next season against the Premier League big boys.

Stoke's record against the top seven this season makes for uncomfortable reading, with just four points gained from the 14 fixtures against Chelsea, Tottenham, Manchester City, Liverpool, Arsenal, Manchester United and Everton.

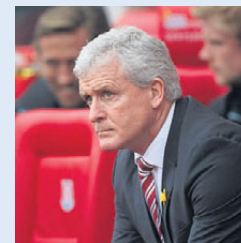
Saints' record is not much better - with seven points from the same set of 14 fixtures (win v Everton and draws with Liverpool (2), Manchester United and Manchester City).

Hughes' side drew with City at the Etihad Stadium and Everton at the bet365 Stadium while earning a point both home and away against United.

The 53-year-old, who takes his side to St Mary's on Sunday, said: "In previous years we've been criticised for not beating the teams around us, but I'm sure a lot of the clubs in and around us have similar records this year.

"You saw on Thursday in the game with the previous champions Leicester against Tottenham that there's a huge difference this year, for whatever reason, and the top six or seven clubs are markedly ahead of everyone else.

"Next year everyone in the middle group will try to improve markedly like those top clubs have this year, I am convinced of that, so there won't be the disparity that there has been this year."



Mark Hughes.

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SAINTS



Still keen to be a boss

Steve Agnew has not been put off management despite failing to keep Middlesbrough in the Premier League.

Assistant head coach Agnew was asked to replace Aitor Karanka in March with 11 games remaining and he will head into the final of those at Liverpool on Sunday having been unable to prevent Boro from relegation.

In some respects it has proved to be a bruising experience, but the 51-year-old claims he remains as keen as ever to manage in his own right one day.

He said: "Being an assistant manager over the last five years is something I have particularly enjoyed, and it's always been top end of the Championship, promotion, staying in the Premier League.

"Being the number one is different and it's something that I've enjoyed. But at the end of it all, I've been very, very disappointed with the outcome. "But has it put me off wanting eventually to be a manager? No, it hasn't."

Boro have won only one and



Steve Agnew

drawn three of the 10 matches for which Agnew has been in charge, and their relegation was confirmed by a 3-0 defeat at Chelsea on May 8. They followed that up by losing at home to Saints last weekend.

Agnew was thrown in at the deep end, but has insisted he has largely enjoyed the experience.

He said: "I've enjoyed it in some ways. Obviously I knew at the time it was a huge challenge and there has been a hell of a lot to deal with, but it's been enjoyable.

"Obviously at the end of it, we didn't get what we set out to achieve and that's the disappointment. Having lost our place in the Premier League is the biggest disappointment, and that's something that's been very difficult to accept."

Chairman Steve Gibson has identified a series of potential targets - former Manchester United midfielder Ryan Giggs is understood not to be among them - after revealing he wants to "smash" the Championship next season.

Agnew said: "It's not about my situation. It's a game on Sunday that we need to prepare for and anything that gets in the way of that is a distraction, so I'll continue to do that work."

Pulis: The elite will spend big this summer



Tony Pulis.

West Brom boss Tony Pulis has warned that the Premier League elite clubs could be out of reach next season.

The Baggies chief expects the top six to pull away by spending heavily to widen the gap to the rest of the clubs.

Albion have sealed a top-10 finish in the Premier League - the first time Pulis has achieved that feat in his management career - having been in European contention until March.

But, ahead of Sunday's finale at Swansea, they have slumped to six defeats in their last eight games - including a 1-0 home loss to Saints - and missed the chance to set a club-record points total in the Premier League.

They sit ninth, 16 points behind seventh-placed Everton, and Pulis is eager to see what happens in the summer transfer market.

"I would really like to see, and I'll do it when the season has finished, the points the top clubs have taken off the so-called lower clubs this year compared to last year," he said.

"All the top sides have got stronger in the summer and they have really taken everything by the scruff of the neck in respect of playing the so-called smaller teams.

"I'm convinced, because the top four is getting really competitive, that the top six or seven will spend enormous amounts of

money next year to enable them to get in the top four.

"I'm convinced that's what will happen and I think they will push on."

Albion lost 3-1 at Manchester City on Tuesday and their last victory was against Arsenal in March, but defender Allan Nyom wants to finish on a high.

"We were disappointed to lose against a very good Manchester City side," Nyom said. "Everyone can see that the effort is still there but things just aren't quite clicking the way they were before.

"We will keep fighting until the end of the season.

"We are looking forward to finishing on a high against Swansea."

Silva would like to stay in England

Echo reporter

Marco Silva would prefer to stay in England but has hinted he may leave relegated Hull for the sake of his career.

The ambitious Portuguese has enhanced his managerial reputation during a four-and-a-half-month spell in charge of the Tigers, despite being unable to prevent them dropping out of the Premier League.

He has been linked with a move away from the KCOM Stadium and is expected to announce a decision on his future after City finish the season at home to second-placed Tottenham on Sunday.

"My past clubs I worked at, I tried always to improve my career," Silva said. "To improve my goals as well, our goals as staff.

"Of course it was a big challenge to us when we came here to the Premier League - to try to remain the club in the Premier League. We took a big risk when we took the decision but we tried to do our best.

"Now I need to see what is the best solution for us as well. But first we need to respect the club."

Silva was a surprise appointment when he replaced Mike Phelan in January.

He was virtually unknown in England but quickly earned praise following an upturn in the struggling Tigers' form, including a draw against Manchester United at Old Trafford and a impressive victory over high-flying Liverpool.

The 39-year-old, whose short-term contract expires at the end



Hull City manager Marco Silva

of the season, is enjoying managing in this country and hopes to remain here.

He has been linked with a move to St Mary's if Claude Puel is sacked by Saints.

"When I came to work in England it's one goal I had in my career and I came here not to come and to go again," said Silva, who has previously managed in his homeland and Greece.

"Since I came, I work hard but I'm happy. I work happy every day. I'm really enjoying the club, the

persons, the fans and what they give to us is amazing.

"My ambition is always to improve. I try to improve every day. Now is the moment to analyse and we will see."

Despite being unable to beat the drop, Silva has developed a positive relationship with Hull's fans.

City supporters continued to sing the manager's name after last weekend's 4-0 defeat at Crystal Palace condemned them to the second-tier next term - something Silva said would not have hap-

pened abroad.

"It's not normal because we didn't achieve our goal," he said. "I think they understand when they look and analyse. They know we work hard in the club and it's easy for them to see the team improve.

"It's not easy to see something in the other countries like that.

"Since I started my career, my relationship with the supporters at the clubs I worked at before was very, very, very good."

Moyes targeting milestone

David Moyes' appetite for football has not been diminished by his bruising season at Sunderland.

The 54-year-old will reach 499 Premier League games as a manager when he sends his relegated side into battle with champions Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

And while his future on Wearside remains a topic for debate, he has his sights set on many, many more.

Moyes said: "I'm incredibly ambitious to reach that and I always think in football management, the best is yet to come."

"I've had some good times and I've certainly had bad times this year, that's for sure, so I'm looking forward to getting those good times back again."

"I'd like to certainly get over 500 games in the Premier League - and I'd actually like to get over 1,000 games in football management, which is a target a lot of the managers are now setting, and there are quite a few who have already achieved it."

In the short term, Moyes faces the task of trying to restore some of Sunderland's battered pride by spoiling Chelsea's party.

Antonio Conte's men will receive the Premier League trophy after the game and will be looking to finish their glorious campaign in resounding fashion.

Moyes is hoping some of their success will rub off on the youngsters he could be forced to include in the face of a late-season injury crisis.

Moyes said: "Maybe seeing what it's like to be winners, maybe seeing what it's like to be champions, can influence some of the players."



David Moyes

NON LEAGUE

Statements of intent from Town



Danny Phillips

Wendy Gee



ALRESFORD Town boss Richard Luffman reckons he has pulled off one of the Wessex coups of the summer by recruiting defender Ross Carmichael from Sydenhams Premier champions Portland United.

The 6ft 5in centre-back is moving to Southampton in the new year and the Magpies were quick to seize the opportunity to sign him.

Rated by Luffman as "possibly the best centre-half in the league", Carmichael made 31 league appearances for the Blues during their march to the title.

"It's a massive signing for us," said Luffman, who is looking to build on the Magpies' fifth-placed finish last term.

"Ross's other half is from Southampton and he's moving here early in 2018. It's a situation we'd been aware of."

"Ross has been one of the mainstays of that successful Portland side, winning the Dorset Premier, Wessex One and the Wessex Premier."

"We shipped a lot of goals last season (63) compared to the top four, but we've managed to resign Lukas McCartney, who had Gosport Borough sniffing round. With him and Ross playing together, we've got a good chance of shoring up our back line."

"For me, Lukas is far and away the best footballer in the Wessex League and has a lot of teams higher up looking at him."

"As for Ross, we're over the moon to have signed him. He was the best defender we faced last season. He's 6ft 5in and a mountain of a bloke."

Not content with shoring up defence, Alresford have added some extra punch to attack for next season by signing Danny Phillips from Whitchurch United.

By his usual high standards Phillips had a quiet time of it in front of goal last term, scoring seven times in 24 appearances as Whitchurch were consigned to relegation to Division One.

The previous two campaigns were a different story, however, with the Southampton-based former Romsey marksman netting 50 times during 2014/15 and 2015/16 combined.

"Last season was a difficult campaign for Danny and his team, but he still caused us all sort of problems with his movement," said Luffman. "He's as good a striker as any in this league playing off the shoulder."

"We've got all of last season's squad signed on again other than a couple and these two signings show how far we've come as a club over the last 12 months."

"We had no budget last season and finished fifth, but this season we'll have a little budget with a win bonus."

Along with McCartney, the likes of Chris Mason, Sam Burt, Tom Sands, Scott Munro and Geoff Dunn have all re-signed.

The Magpies are particularly chuffed to have kept 16-goal wide-man Burt who, according to Luffman, has received interest from Winchester City - where he played reserve team football - and Sholing.

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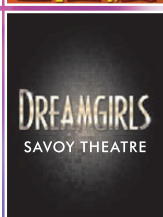


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Top flight stats 2016/17

As the Premier League draws to a close, the Sports Pink takes a look at some of the season's key statistics.

Longest winning streak: 13 - Chelsea, October 1 to December 31
 Longest losing streak: 6 - Hull, September 17 to October 29;
 Crystal Palace, October 15 to November 26 - both sides ended their losing run by beating Saints.
 Best home record: Tottenham - Won 17, drew 2, lost 0, scored 47, conceded 9
 Best away record: Chelsea - Won 13, drew 3, lost 3, scored 30, conceded 16
 Worst home record: Sunderland - Won 3, drew 5, lost 11, scored 16, conceded 34
 Worst away record: Hull - Won 1, drew 3, lost 15, scored 9, conceded 45
 Most points won from a losing position: 18 - Liverpool
 Most points lost from a winning position: 22 - West Ham
 Fastest goal: 30 seconds - Pedro (Chelsea) v Manchester United, Romelu Lukaku (Everton) v Bournemouth, Tom Davies (Everton) v Leicester
 Latest goal: 97 minutes, 14 seconds - Alexis Sanchez (Arsenal) v Burnley

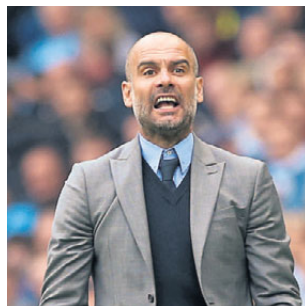


Zlatan Ibrahimovic

Most goals in match: 4 - Romelu Lukaku (Everton) v Bournemouth, Harry Kane (Tottenham) v Leicester
 Most successful managerial change: Paul Clement, Swansea - 1.44 points per game, compared to 0.63 per game before he took over
 Most goals from a new boy: 17, Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Manchester United)
 Most red cards: Team: 5 - Hull, Watford and West Ham. Player: 2 - Miguel Britos (Watford), Granit Xhaka (Arsenal), Ferdinandinho (Manchester City)
 Most yellow cards: Team: 83 - Watford. Player: 14 - Jose Holebas (Watford)
 Most penalty awards: 10 - Bournemouth
 Fewest penalty awards: 1 - West Brom
 Best penalty conversion rate: 100 per cent - Burnley (6 of 6)
 Worst penalty conversion rate: 50 per cent - Saints (3 of 6)
 Most drawn matches: 15, Manchester United
 Longest unbeaten start to the season: 12 - Tottenham (Won 6, drew 6)
 Most improved Premier League side: Chelsea - 2015-16, 10th, 50 points; 2016-17, champions, 90 points from 37 games

NON LEAGUE

Guardiola can't wait for new technology



Pep Guardiola

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola believes it is a matter of time before referees are guided by video technology during matches.

The new offence of 'successful deception of a match official' will be introduced next season in England after being approved at the FA's annual general meeting this week.

Incidents will be reviewed by a panel comprised of a former manager, former player and a former referee, each watching the footage independently.

If they are unanimous in believing a player deceived a match official, the sanction will be a two-match ban.

Simulation has been an issue in the

game for years and there have been a number of notable cases this season - including Robert Snodgrass' apparent dive to earn a penalty for Hull against Crystal Palace and other questionable incidents involving the likes of Leroy Sane, Dele Alli and Marcus Rashford.

Guardiola feels referees would be better served by instant video back-up rather than events being reviewed after the fact.

"Diving is not the most important thing to improve. There are many other cases we can improve," the Spaniard said.

"Sooner or later that is going to happen, the technology (that) will help the referees to be more fair about what

happens in the game, to make less mistakes because there are a lot of mistakes.

"It is because football today is quicker and faster than it was before - and they (officials) are not able to arrive in the right moments and sometimes the decision is wrong."

Swansea head coach Paul Clement also believes any action should be implemented during the game rather than retrospectively.

"The problem is if you're on the end of a potential dive that could cost you points, retrospective action is not going to help you and your team," he said.

Davis: 'I didn't hit it off with Craig'

Wendy Gee



WINCHESTER City boss Craig Davis has put his hands up and admitted that he and departed top scorer Craig Feeney "didn't hit it off."

After bagging 33 goals last season, 21 of them in the Southern One South & West, the 24-year-old marksman has left the Citizens and returned to his old club AFC Totton.

Feeney's form, like City's in general, tailed off towards the end of an ultimately disappointing season which, at one stage, had appeared to be heading for the South & West play-offs.

At his peak, Feeney had been banging in goals for fun - so much so that National League South outfit Poole Town came in for him.

But, much to the surprise and delight of then City boss Ian Saunders, the former Totton & Eling marksman nailed his colours to the Winchester mast for the remainder of the campaign.

City's form was already on the slide, however, when Saunders was relieved of his duties in March.

And, try as he might to turn the tide, Davis - brought in from Fleet Town - was unable to stop the rot, with just one point banked and not a single goal scored in the last six games.

Reflecting on Feeney's departure on Winchester City's unofficial messageboard, Davis said: "All the best to Craig in his new venture. I am sure he will get what he needs as a footballer



Craig Feeney

there (at AFC Totton). I know he will do well.

"It is fair to say that in the six games I had at the end of the season, we didn't hit it off.

"He didn't perform as well as he could (one of several, in fairness to him), culminating in an incident that even he admitted was out of order, something that I dealt with in the dressing room at the time."

The disagreement in question appears to have arisen because Feeney was told to play out wide.

Although prolific scorers are seldom easy to replace, Winchester have another striker lined up from a National League South

club and will announce the signing next month.

Director of football Dave Malone confirmed: "On Monday we agreed a contract with a striker, details of which we will announce after June 1.

"Craig Feeney has departed the Denplan and returned to his former club AFC Totton. This allows us to build our new squad within our restricted financial constraints. We genuinely wouldn't have been able to afford both Craig and the new player.

"We are thankful for Craig's contribution and wish both him and AFC Totton well for the coming season."

Feeney scored just two goals after turning down Poole's advances and Malone is unsure whether the Dolphins' interest took his eye off the ball. "He probably scored twice after that, but whether Poole's interest had any bearing, I'm not sure," he said. "It happens sometimes that strikers have barren periods."

With regards to Feeney being asked to play out wide, Malone added: "He prefers playing down the middle, I understand that, but we don't have an embarrassment of riches and we need team players.

"The move could be good for Craig and good for Totton too."

NON LEAGUE



Shake-up of non league game on the way



A BIG shake-up of non-League football is on the way.

Two new divisions are to be created for the start of the 2018/19 campaign – a Step 4 division to be managed by the Ryman Isthmian League and a Step 3 division controlled by the Southern League.

The first major restructuring of the game since 2004, it follows a long-awaited review of the National League System by the FA.

The goal is to iron out geographical anomalies, reduce the time and expense of travel and encourage more Step 5 clubs (the equivalent of the Sydenhams Wessex Premier) to climb the pyramid.

Currently 276 clubs play in Steps 1-4 and that will increase by 20 to 296 when the two new divisions kick off in August next year.

The existing three Step 3 divisions of 24 clubs (Northern Premier, Southern Premier, Isthmian Premier) will increase to four divisions of 22 clubs, while the six divisions at Step 4 – run by the Northern, Southern and Isthmian leagues – will increase to seven 20-strong divisions.

To achieve that aim, the FA has confirmed that only the bottom clubs currently playing at Step 3 will be relegated at the end of 2017/18.

And only the clubs finishing bottom of the current six Step 4 divisions will go

down next season with 26 clubs coming up from Step 5.

Southern League chairman Terry Barratt enthused: "This is great news after a great deal of hard work by the league and we are now looking forward to catering to thousands more fans from 2018/19 after beating off stiff competition from a number of other leagues who'd declared an interest."

Nick Robinson, chairman of the Ryman Isthmian League, said: "The board has worked hard for some years now to deliver football for all. The aim is to reduce costs for clubs and fans alike so that we encourage more players and supporters to our brand of football."

'We know what Craig will bring'

Wendy Gee



LOUIS Langdown hopes returning striker Craig Feeney will be just the man to get AFC Totton firing on all cylinders.

The race to become Stags' top scorer was something of a damp squib last season with ten-goal Nathaniel Sherborne the only player to reach double figures.

But all that could be about to change with the familiar face of Feeney now back in the fold.

The Waterside-based hotshot was on fire in the first six months of last season for Winchester City and ended the campaign with 21 Southern One South & West goals and 33 in all.

"We know what we're getting with Craig. We're bringing in a player of quality who has done it in this league and scored goals," said Stags boss Langdown.

"We played against him twice last season and he was on our list.

"He lives just down the road in Hythe and he fits into what we want to do. We need to add goals to the team.

"People here know Craig, so there will be no issues with him fitting into the team dynamic. The supporters like him to, so it's a win-win for us."

Feeney's firepower first came to light with Totton's neighbours Totton & Eling from where he had a spell on loan with Gosport Borough.

He was the Stags' leading scorer in 2014/15 but was released from contract at the Testwood Stadium after spending three months travelling in Australia two summers



Craig Feeney, left, in action for Winchester against Barnstaple last season.

ago. He signed for Winchester early in February 2016.

Still a crowd favourite in Salisbury Road, Feeney's return has gone down well with the fans.

The supporters' group, The

Stags Voice, tweeted: "Absolutely banging signing!! Well quality to have Feens back - should never have gone!!"

An official AFC Totton statement said: "Since his departure

from the Stags, Craig really flourished and developed as a Southern League player under the guidance of Winchester City and Louis hopes his added goals can help the team improve."

Ronaldo the best ever

Cristiano Ronaldo's opening goal for Real Madrid at Celta Vigo on Wednesday was his 367th in Europe's top five leagues.

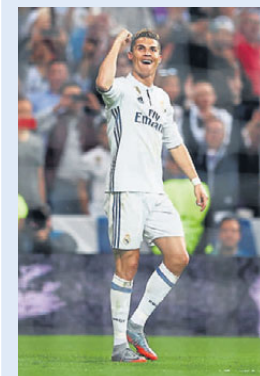
Here, the Sports Pink looks at some of the players the former Manchester United striker has overtaken on his way to the top through his prolific career in England and Spain.

JIMMY GREAVES (366)

Greaves, who was retrospectively awarded a World Cup winner's medal after missing out on a final appearance with England in 1966, plundered the bulk of his goals for Tottenham, Chelsea and West Ham, also spending time in Italy with AC Milan.

GERD MULLER (365)

Muller dished out all of his Bundesliga



Cristiano Ronaldo.

punishment in a Bayern Munich shirt and, come his retirement after three years in America with Fort Lauderdale, he was pushing 500 league goals.

LIONEL MESSI (346)

Barcelona's all-time top scorer with 504 goals in all competitions.

STEVE BLOOMER (317)

Bloomer, who was interned in a prison camp during World War One, never played abroad, instead scoring all of his goals for Derby - in two spells - and Middlesbrough.

DIXIE DEAN (310)

Spent 13 years terrorising defences with Everton and his tally would have been 37 goals higher had the Toffees not spent the 1930-31 season in the second division.

NON LEAGUE



Eastleigh's friendlies

EASTLEIGH'S provisional pre-season fixture list spans a huge swathe of the football pyramid from the SkyBet Championship to the Sydenhams League Division One.

Highlights of the programme are visits from title-winning duo Portsmouth and Sheffield United, winners of League One and League Two respectively.

The Blades, managed by ex-Saints trainee Chris Wilder, are due at the Silverlake on Friday, July 28.

Four days later the Spitfires will be going to the other extreme, visiting Wessex neighbours and good friends AFC Stoneham for a second year running.

The Spitfires' friendlies are scheduled to begin with a home game against League One outfit AFC Wimbledon on Saturday, July 8.

After visiting Basingstoke Town the following Tuesday, Paul Cook's League Two champions Portsmouth are pencilled in for Saturday, July 15.

A trip to Wessex Premier outfit Blackfield & Langley follows on Tuesday, July 18.

FRIENDLIES 2017
Saturday, July 1
Salisbury v Portsmouth.

Wednesday, July 5
Folland Sports v Blackfield & Langley

Friday, July 7
Fawley AFC v AFC Totton
Winchester City v Gosport Borough

Saturday, July 8
Eastleigh v AFC Wimbledon (provisional)
Newport IW v Havant & Waterlooville

Tuesday, July 11
AFC Totton v Aldershot Town
Basingstoke Town v Eastleigh (provisional)
Winchester City v Hungerford Town

Wednesday, July 12
Folland Sports v Moneyfields.

Saturday, July 15
Eastleigh v Portsmouth (provisional)
Winchester City v Hanwell Town

Tuesday, July 18
AFC Totton v Havant & Waterlooville
Andover Town v Salisbury
Blackfield & Langley v Eastleigh (provisional)
Winchester City v Sholing

Wednesday, July 19
Folland Sports v Gosport Borough.

Saturday, July 22
Bashley v Winchester City XI
Fleet Town v Winchester City XI
Havant & Waterlooville v Sutton Utd

Tuesday, July 25
Blackfield & Langley v Winchester City
Horndean v Havant & Waterlooville

Thursday, July 27
Bemerton HH v AFC Totton

Friday, July 28
Eastleigh v Sheffield Utd (provisional)

Saturday, July 29
Hailsham v Folland Sports
Havant & Waterlooville v Portsmouth
Winchester City v Marlow

Tuesday, August 1
AFC Stoneham v Eastleigh
Hamble Club v Winchester City

Saturday, August 5
Salisbury v Basingstoke Town
Winchester City v Farnborough

Tubbs links up with his ex-Cherries boss Lee



Matt Tubbs.

MATT Tubbs has opted to stay local by joining newly-promoted Havant & Waterlooville on a two-year deal.

The 32-year-old striker, who ended last season at Eastleigh, is linking up again with his old Cherries boss Lee Bradbury at Westleigh Park.

It is understood Tubbs, who played in the Football League for Cherries, Portsmouth and Crawley Town, had offers from higher up the pyramid.

But the Salisbury-born marksman has opted to remain on the south coast and help the Hawks re-establish themselves as a non-League force.

Tubbs is Havant's first summer signing after they booked their ticket back to the

National League South just 12 months after relegation.

He spent just over a year at Fratton Park before joining Eastleigh on loan for the latter part of the 2015/16 campaign.

Tubbs had been League 2's leading goalscorer in 2014/15 - starting the season at AFC Wimbledon on loan from Cherries and then moving to Pompey in the January transfer window - but fell out of favour once Paul Cook arrived as boss in the summer of 2015.

Following his release from Pompey last summer, Tubbs signed for Forest Green and Sutton before Eastleigh boss Richard Hill brought him back to the Silverlake in March to help steady the ship.

He made nine appearances for the Spitfires, scoring one goal, as they secured National League survival.

Looking forward to his new challenge with the newly-promoted Ryman Premier champions, Tubbs said: "Lee signed me at Bournemouth, so we both know what we are about.

"I will give it 100 per cent and remain confident in my ability to do a job."

Bradbury signed Tubbs for £500,000 for Bournemouth in the January 2012 transfer window from Crawley, but never got to select him.

The striker arrived with a hernia problem and, by the time it was fixed, the manager had lost his job.

Drury plays on through the pain

Wendy Gee



ANDY Drury played through the pain barrier for two months to help haul Ebbsfleet United into the National League.

The former Eastleigh midfielder had been carrying an ankle injury since Fleet's 3-0 win at St Albans in March.

But the 33-year-old, who left Eastleigh by mutual consent in December to play closer to his Kent home, bravely soldiered on.

And his reward came when he set up Darren McQueen's winner as ten-man Fleet roared back from behind to eclipse Chelmsford City 2-1 in last weekend's NL South play-off final.

Drury - described by Eastleigh chairman Stewart Donald as "one of the best players to ever be a Spitfire" - revealed afterwards: "I haven't had the opportunity to rest it (the injury), so it'll be nice to get it sorted. I've been taking really strong painkillers for the last few months since that game.

"I'm happy. We've got promoted and I played every single game since then."

It was Ebbsfleet manager Daryl McMahon, another former Spitfires midfielder, who signed Drury and the ex-Luton player is delighted to have repaid him with promotion.

"The faith Daryl put in me by signing me at the time, I wanted to do it for him," said Drury. "He's a very, very good manager, especially at this level, and I think he'll go a hell of a way in the game.

"I also wanted to get promoted myself and for the fans as well."



Andy Drury in action for Eastleigh.

Ebbsfleet will be among six new teams joining Eastleigh in the National League set-up next season.

AFC Fylde, FC Halifax Town and Maidenhead United are also

on their way up, while Hartlepool and Leyton Orient drop down from the Football League.

Promoted Ryman Premier duo Havant & Waterlooville and Bog-

nor move up into the National League South, while relegated Gosport Borough have been placed in the Southern Premier along with Southern One Central play-off winners Farnborough.

AFC Totton, Winchester City and Salisbury will be joined in the Southern One South & West by newcomers Bristol Manor Farm, Cinderford Town, Cirencester and Kidlington.

As ever, all allocations are provisional pending ratification at each league's AGM next month.

Provisional league structures for 2017/18.

NATIONAL LEAGUE: AFC Fylde, Aldershot, Barnrow, Boreham Wood, Bromley, Chester, Dagenham & Redbridge, Dover, Eastleigh, Ebbsfleet, Gateshead, Guiseley, Hartlepool, FC Halifax, Leyton Orient, Macclesfield, Maidenhead, Maidstone, Solihull Moors, Sutton, Torquay, Tranmere, Woking, Wrexham.

NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH: Bath City, Bognor Regis, Braintree, Chelmsford, Chippenham, Concord, Dartford, East Thurrock, Eastbourne Borough, Gloucester City, Hampton & Richmond, Havant & W, Hemel H, Hungerford, Oxford City, Poole, St Albans, Truro, Wealdstone, Welling, Weston-super-Mare, Whitehawk.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER: Banbury, Basingstoke Town, Biggleswade, Bishops Cleeve, Chesham, Dorchester, Dunstable, Farnborough, Frome, Gosport, Hereford, Hitchin, Kettering, Kings Lynn, Kings Langley, Merthyr Town, Redditch, Royston, Slough, St Ives, St Neots, Stratford, Tiverton, Weymouth.

SOUTHERN DIVISION ONE SOUTH & WEST: AFC Totton, Barnstaple, Bideford, Bishops Cleeve, Bristol MF, Cinderford, Cirencester, Didcot, Evesham, Kidlington, Larkhall, Mangotsfield, North Leigh, Paulton Rovers, Salisbury, Shortwood, Slimbridge, Swindon Supermarine, Taunton, Wimborne, Winchester City, Yate.

SOUTHERN DIVISION ONE CENTRAL: AFC Dunstable, AFC Kempston Rovers, AFC Rushden & Diamonds, Arlesey, Ashford (Middx), Aylesbury, Aylesbury, Barton Rovers, Beaconsfield, Bedford, Cambridge City, Chalfont St Peter, Egham, Fleet Town, Hanwell, Hartley W, Hayes & Yeading, Marlow, Moneyfields, Northwood, Thame, Uxbridge.

NON LEAGUE



Horner back at Town - a year after leaving



Gareth Horner

GARETH HORNER has returned to manage Amesbury Town - a year after leaving.

It was Horner who led the Bonnymead Park outfit into the Sydenhams Premier Division last spring, but he left just weeks later, bringing the curtain down on his three-and-a-half-year stint in charge.

After a somewhat turbulent season, the Blues just about preserved their top-flight status under the interim management of defender Adam Pearson, who has left to sign playing forms for An-

dover Town.

The returning Horner will work in tandem with another well-known club name, Carlo Downie.

Horner said: "Stepping down from the club a year ago was one of the hardest decisions I have had to make in football, though it was necessary that I focused on other areas of my life.

"However, having been in a position to return to management, something in all honesty I missed intensely, it's fantastic to be able to come back.

"The forthcoming year will be

a critical season for the club and we will be looking to establish a competitive squad to continue our development in the Wessex Premier."

Downie added: "The club has a lot of potential and I am confident that our combined experience and record of success will make a positive impact on the pitch."

Amesbury have undergone wholesale changes since the end of the 2016/17 season with Gino Nardiello the new chairman and Robbie Trim succeeding Spencer Mulholland as vice-chairman.

Browne has big boots to step into at Portland

SIMON Browne has finally found his way back into football after being named as new boss of Sydenhams Premier champions Portland United.

The former Salisbury and Weymouth defender, previously manager at Hamworthy United, had been looking for a route back into the game since being controversially sacked by Southern League outfit Wimborne Town 12 months ago.

"I don't think it's any secret that I've wanted to get back into football since leaving Wimborne, but nothing has come to anything until now," said Browne. "I am delighted to be offered the Portland job and the hard work starts now I guess.

"I am starting off where the club is in a pretty strong position.

"Next year will be a challenge on many different fronts and it's certainly a different one for me to take over."



Simon Browne

Browne succeeds the highly successful Gary Bailey, who resigned from the Portland job earlier this month having achieved back-to-back Sydenhams One and Sydenhams Premier titles.

Blues chairman Robin Satherley said: "We are really happy to get Simon.

"He is an experienced manager and has had experience at Hamworthy United and Wimborne Town.

"Obviously he has got big shoes to fill after the record of Gary Bailey, but we are confident Simon will get us to the place we eventually want to be.

"Obviously it is going to be difficult for any manager to repeat what has just been done, but we look forward to the new season and are confident that Simon will put the necessary things in position for the Blues to continue our success in the Wessex League."

Portland, however, will go into the new season without defensive linchpin Ross Carmichael.

The towering centre-back is moving to Southampton and has left the Islanders to sign for divisional rivals Alresford Town.

Wessex aim to Kap indiscipline!

Wendy Gee



KAPPA and MJM Sports are backing a brand new incentive for good behaviour in the Sydenhams Football League.

The companies are combining to sponsor a new 'Respect' programme being rolled out for 2017/18 which will reward teams for keeping in the referee's good books.

Each month the club with the fewest yellow and red cards in both the Premier Division and Division One will be awarded a £100 Kappa/MJM Sports voucher to be redeemed for Kappa merchandise.

Over the course of the season it equates to an impressive £1,600 worth of sponsorship.

The idea is the brainchild of Italian sportswear brand Kappa and will be delivered by its appointed supplier MJM Sports of Bideford.

Dave Bandell, team sports manager of Kappa UK, explained: "As part of our strategy to be at the heart of grass roots football in the UK, this partnership with MJM Sports and the Sydenhams Football League is perfect.

"With this initiative we hope to see the 'Respect' campaign become a major part of the league's drive for fair play throughout all divisions."

Terry Schofield, managing director of MJM Sports, added: "This is a major deal for us with this level of sponsorship and to help promote 'Respect' is really an honour.

"It is hoped that it will bring a



Sydenhams Wessex League vice-chairman Nick Spencer, chairman Ian Hoare and Terry Schofield, managing director of MJM Sports.

more sportsman-like behaviour to players and raise the professional face of the league.

"To partner this league works perfectly for all concerned. There are no losers - unless you collect yellow and red cards."

Sydenhams League chairman Ian Hoare said: "This is a significant move to help the 'Respect' programme. To reward teams for good discipline can only be a good thing. We are looking forward to the start of the sponsorship in

August and seeing who the winners are.

"Many thanks to MJM Sports and Kappa for this superb deal."

*Verwood Town picked up the overall "Alf Peckham Respect Trophy" and a £400 cheque for being the best behaved Sydenhams Wessex side of 2016/17.

The top-three in each division were - Premier Division: Verwood Town, Sholing, Fawley AFC; Division One: Fleet Spurs, US Portsmouth, Ringwood Town.

Last Saturday's annual club dinner/presentation night at the Novotel, Southampton, also saw Portland United (Premier Division) and East Cowes Vics (Division One) collect the best match-day programme awards, while Horndean and Ringwood Town were named clubs-of-the-month for April.

A special presentation was made to referees Rob Ablitt and Jake Topp who have been promoted to Level 3.

NON LEAGUE



Ex-Bash boss Tom excited about new Terras challenge



Tom Prodomo coaching.

FORMER Bashley boss Tom Prodomo is excited by the challenge of being head coach of sleeping non-League giants Weymouth.

Prodomo has made the move from the New Forest to become part of former Cherries midfielder Mark Molesley's coaching structure at the Southern Premier Division club.

He is joined on the Dorset coast by brother Joe, the Terras' new first-team goalkeeping coach.

Prodomo, who led Bash to a 14th-placed finish in the Sydenhams Wessex Premier Division last term, said: "I am delighted to accept the position and excited to get started.

"Probably, if I'm honest, this was the only opportunity that would have taken me away

(from Bashley) at this stage.

"The size of the club Weymouth is, the fantastic fan base it has, the opportunity to work with the staff and the chairman ... it was an opportunity I felt that I couldn't turn down.

"Being involved in a club like Weymouth with the staff and the players is a massive privilege.

"But just being involved is not the objective.

"Being successful is what we want to do.

"It's going to be my job, as well as the rest of the staff, to transmit that work ethic to the players and give the fans something to be proud of."

Prodomo boasts an impressive CV, having worked at the likes of AFC Bournemouth, West Bromwich Albion and Exeter City.

Currently head of football at Brockenhurst College and on the staff of the England Colleges FA, he is well prepared to help drive the Terras forward on the training ground.

"The head coaching role is something I'm really looking forward to," he said.

"It's all the things I am passionate about doing in terms of preparing the team for games on the training field and also feeding back to them about their performances."

New role for Jason

FORMER Eastleigh goalkeeper Jason Matthews has bounced straight back into football after losing his job as manager of Weymouth.

The 42-year-old, pictured, is joining Chippenham Town as player-coach for next season.

Matthews, who had been playing for Exmouth Town following his Terras departure, joins midfielder Dean Evans and full-back Mark Cooper – both members of his Weymouth squad from last term – at Hardenhuish Park.

Chippenham have won promotion to the National League South as Southern Premier Division champions.

Mark Collier, boss of the Bluebirds, said: "I have been in talks since Jase left Weymouth FC.

"He brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the club and he is also able to play, which is a huge bonus.

"As a club we needed to add to the coaching and backroom staff and Jason fills that void perfectly.

"He had received several offers but was impressed with the vision and clear objectives we have."



No regrets for new Stags keeper

Wendy Gee



AFC TOTTON'S new goalkeeper Shane Murphy has no regrets about swapping Dorchester Town for a new adventure with the Stags.

The move represents a drop in divisions from the Southern Premier to the Southern One South & West.

But Murphy, who was coached by ex-Saint Neil Moss as a youngster at AFC Bournemouth, is looking forward to working under Stags boss Louis Langdown, former head of sports science with the Cherries.

Discussing his move to the Testwood Stadium, 24-year-old Murphy said: "Totton got in touch with me and I went and spoke with them. They've got some plans for how they want the club to run and it's a really exciting time for them at the moment.

Really excited

"They've got a young manager coming through, they want to play football the right way and, off the pitch, they're going to do things the right way as well. From what they've said, I'm really excited to get started."

From being "Dorchester through and through", Murphy admitted he had not been "completely happy" with the Magpies over the last 18 months.

"It was nothing to do with our league position or the situation we were in," he explained. "For my best interests I felt I needed to go somewhere where I could en-



Shane Murphy

joy my football again to get back to my best.

"There are reasons that I don't want to go into. I went into the club every week and trained hard, but there was just a few bits that didn't sit right with me which perhaps made it not as enjoyable as it could have been.

"But I'm extremely grateful for

all the help I've had at Dorchester since I first joined. There's some great people at the club and all of their work is appreciated by me. They're the people that the club need to keep hold of because they really care.

"Thanks also go to the fans. They haven't had a great time recently but, hopefully, the club

can turn that around and go back to where they should be, which is pushing towards the Conference South."

● Totton have 2017/18 season-tickets available at 'early bird' prices. Until July 3, tickets can be purchased for £140 adults and £85 concessions (60-plus/students) - a saving of £20.

NON LEAGUE



The return of Brockstock!

BROCKENHURST'S Grigg Lane ground will once again be taking a break from football to host a music, beer and cider festival next weekend.

The successful revival of Brockstock last summer whetted the appetite for more.

This year's event, being held on May 27/28, will feature a host of live bands, side stalls, tea garden and bars, along with food outlets and

plenty of entertainment for all the family.

A vital fundraising event for the club, monies raised last year helped the Sydenhams Wessex League outfit fund new floodlights which were officially switched on in August by ex-Saint Francis Benali.

Entry to Brockstock 2017 is free, but any donations at the gate will go towards an important but costly project to upgrade the club's electrical systems.

Gates open at 12 noon on

both days with live music starting around 1pm.

● Provisional

Brockstock 2017 line-up –
Saturday, May 27: Nick Hayward Young (1pm), Below The Belt (2pm), M13 (3.15pm), Diamond Dogz (4.45pm), Turncoat (6.15pm), Day Four (7.45pm).

Sunday, May 28: Ray Foster (1pm), The Floaters (2pm), Trouble In Mind (3.15pm), Just Jamin (4.45pm), Sunstroke (6.15pm).

Kelly joins Boatmen

Wendy
Gee



SHOLING have swooped for Newport IW's up-and-coming young striker Connor Kelly.

Having joined Port as a young boy, Kelly worked his way through the youth ranks and into the first team, finishing top scorer for the last two seasons.

Described by the Islanders as a "quick and talented forward player," Kelly made his first-team debut towards the end of the 2014/15 campaign under former boss Steve Brougham.

His game has since developed under the watchful eye of Andy Sampson and he has been richly praised by the St George's Park outfit for his "exceptional performance and attitude, both on and off the pitch."

Confirming Kelly had put pen to paper for Sydenhams Premier rivals Sholing, a Newport statement said: "His talent and pace on the pitch will be greatly missed."

"The Port's top goalscorer will no doubt add something exceptional to Sholing manager Dave Diaper's first-team squad."

"Newport IW wish Connor all the very best next season at Sholing and thank him for all he has given to The Port over the years."

Kelly bowed out on a high, helping Newport retain the prestigious Isle of Wight Gold Cup following a penalty shootout with Cowes Sports.

After Jordan Browne had fired Cowes into an early lead, Kelly latched onto Joe Butcher's cross to make it 1-1 at half-time.

Cowes were reduced to ten men when ex-AFC Totton marksman John McKie picked up a second yellow card for dissent, but Port couldn't force a breakthrough.

With no extra time, the final went straight to penalties which Newport won 5-3.

Butcher converted the all-important fifth Port penalty to get the celebrations under-



Connor Kelly

way.

● After a year managing Sholing's development team, Iain Calder has stepped into the role of first-team coach.

Taking charge of the under-18 development squad is last season's under-16s boss Patrick McGonigle.

● Sholing are holding a 'family fun day' at their Universal Stadium home on Saturday, July 1 (10am-5pm). Everyone is invited along to the event, which includes a bouncy castle, BBQ, sweet and cake stall, plus penalty shootout and keepy-uppy competitions. There will be a bar and hot and cold refreshments.

Entry is £2 adults and free for under-16s.

Eastleigh secretary Murphy still trying to track down ex-players

WHILE manager Richard Hill has launched the hunt for new Eastleigh players, club secretary Ray Murphy is still trying to track down some old ones.

Coinciding with the release of 'The Story So Far', a book tracing the history of Eastleigh Football Club, the Spitfires have organised a players' reunion at the Silverlake Stadium next Sunday (May 28, 3pm).

Several players from Swaythling, Swaythling Athletic and Eastleigh Football Club have been found in various corners of the world, but there are still more to be unearthed.

With 1990s midfielder Robbie Abbott now living in Thailand and 1960s goalkeeper Gordon Moody based in South Africa, the net has been thrown far and wide to locate as many ex-players as possible.

The Spitfires are still trying to search out wing-half Keith Cooper, the club's second all-time appearance maker, who made just shy of 600 appearances between 1968 and 1986.

Also on the missing list is Tony Mucci, a striker from the late 1980s, former manager Tony Noble, and John Clarkson, who played left-back from 1956 through to 1970 with 300 club appearances under his belt.

Murphy is also keen to trace Richard 'Dickie' Morgan, another who made 300 club appearances, going back to the early-50s, and 1960s left-back Ricky Ironside.

From more recent times Eastleigh are still searching for, among others, goalkeeper Colin Matthews, striker Ricky Fernandez, Jason Scannell and Simon De'Ath.

If you can help, please contact organiser Ray Murphy on 07508 431451 or at rmurphy@eastleighfc.com.

The new book was finally sent to print this week and will be first seen at the reunion, which will run from 3pm to midnight.

President and club founder Derik Brooks will be there for part of the day and others attending include former manager Trevor Parker who is flying back from Portugal.

Ex-striker John Robson, former skipper Mel Davolls, striker Jack Midson, record club appearance maker Ian Knight, Bill Ragan, Terry Rawlins, Dave Bundy, Dean Byrne and defenders Chris Collins and Robbie Marshall are a few more names to whet the appetite.

The book 'The Story So Far' is still available to pre-order at £15 per copy plus postage. It will be on general sale from Tuesday, May 30.

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NON LEAGUE



Tomasso rewarded with first City deal

WINCHESTER City have rewarded Adam Tomasso with his first club contract – and there is a new one in the pipeline for Danny King too.

The defensive duo have been part of the Denplan City Ground furniture for several years and are the embodiment of club loyalty.

The tenacious Tomasso, part of the Sydenhams Wessex promotion-winning side of 2014/15, has a big admirer in director of football Dave Malone.

He said: “Adam has been with the club for several years now, through thick and thin, and deserves this contract for his unstinting loyalty and



Adam Tomasso.

commitment.

“He was here when I came back to the club with (chairman) Paul Murray.”

Left-back King goes back even further with City.

“It’s hard to believe Danny’s been at the club for the best part of ten years,” marvelled Malone. “We will be speaking to him about a new contract very soon – and maybe a testimonial game at some point too.”

“We feel both players deserve contracts. They’ve both seen the good, the bad and the ugly at Winchester and have stayed loyal to the club.”

“We now have 14 players committed to playing for Winchester next season, including some exciting new signings that will be confirmed soon.”

“There are loads of possible trialists kicking around too, so there’s plenty of reason for optimism.”

Dormer replaces Davis at Fleet Town



Fleet Town boss Steve Dormer.

CRAIG Davis’s successor at Fleet Town has been appointed.

Davis, now manager of Winchester City, has been replaced at Calthorpe Park by former Guildford City boss Steve Dormer.

Coaches Sam Raffique and Mark Whitely complete the new line-up at the Southern One Central outfit and, between them, the trio take a lot of experience to north Hampshire.

Dormer has been both a player and coach at AFC

Wimbledon, Southall, Yeading, Wealdstone and Spelthorne Sports.

Raffique is a fully qualified UEFA B Licence coach, while Whitely has coached at both youth and senior level and is vastly experienced in the treatment of sports injuries. The coaching pair were recently at Godalming and, prior to that, had a successful stint with Camberley.

Fleet chairman Chris Arnold said: “Steve and his team bring with them exactly the experience and

ambition we’re looking for.

“They’re well connected and we’re looking forward to them using their knowledge and expertise to build on our existing squad as well as focusing on bringing youth players through.”

Dormer said he was “thrilled” to be given the opportunity.

“We will be working hard to push the players with the aim of achieving the highest possible level of success for the club,” he pledged.

Camrose gets a stay of execution

Wendy Gee



BASINGSTOKE Town fans have mixed feelings about staying at the Camrose Ground next season.

While they are delighted at remaining on home soil in the Southern Premier Division, concerns have been raised about how the club will be funded, writes Ken Gaunt.

Out-going owner Rafi Razzak has promised to bankroll the team, but that is as far as it goes at the moment.

A fans’ forum will take place this Tuesday (May 23) to explain the intention to move into a supporters’/community club owned and run by its members.

Former director and Keep Football In Basingstoke (KFIB) founder, Simon Hood, said: “I think it’s great (staying at the Camrose), it’s what I have been fighting for.”

“It’s a shame the club didn’t listen to fans and the council sooner as this could have been settled a long time ago.

“Time and effort could have been spent on moving the club into a community-owned club, rather than fighting to keep our home.

“However, let’s not be naïve, this is still only a temporary solution.

“The Camrose will still be sold and housing built on it. Once the planning permission is complete then we will be homeless again.”



CamroseGround

The supporters’ club have organised the forum and chairman Martin French said: “Following the club’s recent success in winning the Hampshire Senior Cup, further superb news came out which confirmed we will start the 2017/18 season at our home, the Camrose.

“However, this is just the first step of many which Basingstoke

Town FC and its supporters face over the coming 12 months.

“The owner, Mr Razzak, has decided to part ways with the club, but is also intending to redevelop the ground for housing to recoup the money he has loaned the club.

“Where we play in future seasons, along with how we fund the club going forward, are still huge concerns.

“The process over the coming months will include an election of a new management board which will lead the club.

“The owner, it is hoped, will hand over his shares and the ownership to the new community club.

“I urge all Basingstoke Town fans and members of the local community to come to the forum.”

NON LEAGUE



Salisbury tribute to 'generous' founder Vic

VIC Wakeling, a founder member of the new Salisbury FC, has passed away at the age of 73.

Vic donated a four-figure sum to help the club get up and running and managed to attend a few matches with his grandson during Whites' Wessex League championship season.

He was invited to their recent Southern One South & West play-off final but, sadly,

was too ill to attend.

After a long career as a newspaper journalist and following a spell with ITV in Southampton, Vic worked his way up from head of football to head of sport and then managing director of Sky Sports.

He was credited with revolutionising sport both on and off the pitch and was awarded the CBE in 2011.

Though a Newcastle United supporter,

Geordie-born Vic was a keen non-League fan and became a founder member of the new Salisbury FC in 2015 when invited by former Whites vice-chairman Ian Ridley.

An SFC statement said: "All at the club thank Vic for his generous backing which helped establish Salisbury FC. Our thoughts are with his wife Susan and four children, Sally, Rob, Caroline and Kate."

Angell on the move

FORMER AFC Totton midfielder Curtis Angell has joined Hellenic Premier Division outfit Thatcham Town.

Angell is one of two new signings brought in by Thatcham boss Danny Robinson, who is well-known down this neck of the woods from his time co-managing Alresford Town and Winchester City.

Robinson's other new addition is striker Anthony White, signed from Highmoor Ibis.

Thatcham, a former Wessex League club, wound up fourth in the Hellenic standings last term.

Their Southampton-based assistant manager Andy Darnton said: "The club are looking to move to the next level and, with us finishing fourth last season, it was classed as a

Poole boss 'star struck' by Wenger

Paul
McNamara

POOLE Town boss Tom Killick admitted he was "star struck" when he met Arsene Wenger following Arsenal's recent victory at Southampton.

Killick was part of a Dolphins entourage at St Mary's after Saints striker Charlie Austin had generously offered his former club free use of his executive box for the evening.

Austin's "amazing gesture" enabled Poole to sell hospitality in order to generate further funds towards the improvement of their Black Gold Stadium home.

The club's recently finished campaign was played out to the backdrop of a dramatic race against time, with Dolphins having to complete a significant ground upgrade by March 31 to avoid relegation from National League South.

They succeeded in that mission, and Killick insisted Austin deserved a large slice of credit for continuing to back the club he left for Swindon Town in 2009.

Killick said: "It was an amazing gesture. He has his friends and family, in particular, who normally use the box and it was brilliant for us to have that opportunity.

"The club was able to raise money by selling that hospitality.

"It was typical of Charlie. The money we have received from him over the years, in terms of transfer fees and sell-on clauses, has been an absolutely integral part of our progression.

"And he goes above and beyond what anyone could really expect of him, to help us out.

"A lot of professional footballers get criticised and I think the gesture he made should be highlighted. It was hugely appreciated by the club and by me."



Tom Killick with Arsenal's Alexis Sanchez.

Poole's improbable promotion bid was derailed by their off-pitch issues last season. They secured an against-the-odds fifth-placed finish in the first campaign following their jump from the Southern Premier League.

That would have secured a play-off semi-final with eventual winners Ebbsfleet, only for FA bigwigs to intervene.

Despite the transformation of Dolphins' Tatnam headquarters, the ground does not have 500 undercover seats, an obligation for clubs operating at the highest level of the non-League game.

Consequently, Poole's play-off spot was taken by Hampton & Richmond, with vice-chairman Chris Reeves warning that spending on the extra seats could have placed the club's existence in jeopardy.

Austin netted 64 goals in 57 matches under Killick, when Poole were still a Wessex League club.

He has used his Twitter account to keep the club's plight in the public domain and topped off his guests' visit to St Mary's by arranging for them to mingle with the players post-match.

Killick secured a snap with brilliant Chilean attacker Alexis Sanchez, who scored in Arsenal's 2-0 win.

But it was his encounter with three-times Premier League winner Wenger that made a lasting impression.

"Charlie got us passes into the players' lounge and for me, personally, it was a very good evening," said Killick.

"I was very star struck! I managed to have my picture taken with Arsene Wenger, which was a massive thing for me. I was completely in awe of him."



Curtis Angell, right.

bit of a disappointment.

"Hopefully, by adding these players, it will only enhance a very good squad in helping us achieve the club's, along with mine and Danny's, expectations.

"We have targeted a couple more signings and these will be announced in the coming weeks."

All of last season's Thatcham squad have agreed to re-sign, including 33-goal top scorer Shane Cooper-Clarke who picked up the manager's and supporters' player-of-the-season award. Goalkeeper Chris Rackley was crowned players' player.

● Another ex-AFC Totton player, Billy Lowes, has joined Southern Premier outfit Dorchester Town on a one-year deal.

Magpies boss Craig Laird has also secured the services of Jake Mawford, Neil Martin and son Callum Laird on 12-month contracts.

Koeman's challenges

Everton boss Ronald Koeman has emphasised he can handle the pressure of increased expectation and is relishing the challenges of next term.

What has been an encouraging first season under Koeman for the Toffees concludes with Sunday's Premier League trip to Arsenal.

Everton head into the contest guaranteed to finish seventh, a spot that gives them a place in the third qualifying round of the 2017-18 Europa League.

Former Saints boss Koeman says planning for next season has already been ongoing for "two, three months", with him having had "several" meetings with the board in which potential moves in the transfer market were discussed.

And the Dutchman, who twice guided Saints into Europe, added: "If we can do our business this summer, the team for next season will be really strong."

"Normally, if you have a stronger team, then the expectations will be higher than before. But that's okay."

"That means more pressure for the players and, for sure, more pressure for the manager. But I know I can deal with the pressure, that's no problem."

Asked what Everton need to do to step things up given the way 2016-17 has gone, Koeman said: "We had a really strong home record, but we need to improve away, and we need to be more clinical, more productive."

"We know it is difficult - and playing in Europe next season will make it even more tough."

"We take it really seriously because we like to play in Europe."

"That is important for the club."

SAINTS

The man who is

IT is a topic which has divided the Saints fanbase like no other.

Is Claude Puel the right man to lead the club into next season, or should he be sacked after just one year in the Premier League?

Saints could finish eighth in the top flight - as they did under Mauricio Pochettino three years ago - and were desperately unlucky not to win the League Cup final at Wembley back in February.

In addition, Puel has been keen to give academy graduates a chance - witness the opportunities afforded to Josh Sims and Sam McQueen. In addition, he has brought on defender Jack Stephens.

Puel has also been without his influential centre half Virgil van Dijk since late January, and top scorer Charlie Austin since early December.

Given all that, some fans are happy for Puel to continue his work in 2017/18.

Others, though, point to his constant rotating, his safety-first tactics and the Europa League campaign as reasons why the Frenchman should be axed.

Here, the Sports Pink publishes a lengthy list of postings from the Daily Echo's website this week debating Puel's future.

It is a fascinating discussion, and only time will tell whether the pro-Puel camp or the anti-Puel brigade will get what they want.

To have your say, log into dailyecho.co.uk and comment online.

Has Puel done enough to carry on ... or should he be sacked?



Claude Puel.

I am praying that now Hull are relegated we can tempt Marco Silva and bring Harry Maguire with him and re-introduce the "Southampton Way" back to St. Mary's.

bakeyboy

Marco Silva - be careful about listening too much to the pundits. Sure, he's the flavour of the month but swapping someone who got us to a cup final beating Liverpool home and away and looks likely to finish top nine, for someone who got relegated and let them sell his best players for cheap doesn't seem ideal for us.

All new managers, especially in hopeless situations get a short term reaction but I'd rather stick with Claude.

We virtually all said top eight was likely best case scenario at the start due to Europe and we nearly won something.

As for 'the Southampton way' isn't that about putting trust in home grown talent? If so Claude has made massive progress in losing the 'foreign heavy' approach that Ron used to get stick for.

SaintJD

Last season we got 63 points and

PINK

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SAINTS



dividing fans ...



provided some entertainment. This season we will be lucky to get 50, we have bored the pants off the fans and the lack of goals is embarrassing. The only plus point of the season was a great day out at Wembley where the usual big team officials robbed us of a possible victory. That was not the fault of the manager, but the tactics and style of play for the season very definitely were.

Clever Dick

If we sell 2/3 of our best players in the summer and buy in poor replacements that will be it for me.

I would like the club to be sold to a responsible owner with money to invest in a new manager and quality players. Some fans think finishing in the top 10 is ok for Southampton. That attitude will never be ok for me. There has to be ambition all the time, it's the only way to improve.

George Chivers

Without mega funding, the best we can hope for at the moment is best of the rest, around eighty other teams in the Football League would be happy to be where we are, it is all relative.

Our expectations are greater than our capabilities.

ospreysaint

There is a saying that when in doubt do nowt...this will probably be Puel's safeguard. There are many who have sympathy with losing our best striker and defender, yet losing them to injury or selling/losing your best every year ain't any different.

If a really talented coach becomes available I would swap out, however unless there is someone out there who's history clearly demonstrates the ability to take

us further, probably best to sit tight.

warrens 76

I would gladly swap the virtually pointless league position (any below top 6) we are in now, for anything down to 17th as long as we scored goals and entertained in at least the awful home performances.

Too much this season has been a dogs breakfast of tactics and injuries happen so that card can't be used, but selling talent and buying crocks is down to Reed who should get some stick in these blogs.

Redsnapper

You would rather we were dying with relegation but played good football - really?

As for us buying crocks, that isn't even worth responding to - you mean the crocks that we sold for multi millions or the ones that got injured after we bought them? ...think some fans (are) really losing the grip on reality as they have such anti Puel and Reed blinkers glued on.

Miltonroad76

I want Puel gone this summer, because of the formations, the tactics, the team selections, the tempo/philosophy and the rotation policy that means no player can play twice a week at any point except Virgil and Oriol.

You rest players when they are tired, not eight changes for every match, shoe-horning 2nd string players into positions that don't suit them irrespective of current form.

I want him gone because of the things that Puel is responsible for. He has a talented, deep squad. A better manager could have unquestionably got more.

He's not awful, he's just not great. He was a panic appointment that's not worked out, if we can do better I don't see why you'd keep him.

Sir Burt Millichip

I agree that if we had arrived at the same position, but with a more exciting style, most people would be quite satisfied with this season bearing in mind the comings and goings and injuries that Claude has had to contend with.

Equally, I'm sure that the board who have no interest in how the results and position of safety is achieved, will be more than satisfied with the season overall, and will be unlikely to seek Claude's departure, anytime soon.

Positively4thStreet

I am in favour of giving Claude another season but am very aware of the rising anti feeling.

Continued on page 16

What next for champs?

Chelsea won the Premier League title, but what do they need to do this summer to stay competitive next season?

Leadership question

How do Chelsea replace John Terry? Do they need to? It is a question which has long troubled the Blues, but with the defence resilient, perhaps only Terry's leadership will be missed. And his absence could allow quieter players, such as Cesar Azpilicueta, to speak up.

Cash in on Costa?

Diego Costa has admitted agitating for a return to Atletico Madrid before and Chelsea could cash in on the striker if a big-money offer is received. He has two years left on his current contract, is aged 29 in October and had lean streaks at times. The prospect of a January move to China almost derailed Chelsea, who may look for a new attacking focal point - despite Costa top scoring with 20 goals so far.

Keep Hazard

Eden Hazard has been linked with a £100million move to Real Madrid. The Belgium playmaker - handed his professional chance by Saints boss Claude Puel at Lille - demonstrated



Diego Costa

his ability consistently for the Blues, showing his value time and again (not least with two early goals against Saints). He is an integral figure for Chelsea, who should remind him that he would not be at Real.

Incoming players

Head coach Antonio Conte has been saying for some time that more players are needed for a dual English and European assault. Chelsea relied on a small core group, but with Champions League football next season they now need to bolster the ranks with quality. They have long been linked with a move for Saints star Virgil van Dijk, though he would cost around £50m. Or instead Chelsea may place faith in youngsters like Ruben Loftus-Cheek and returning loanees such as Andreas Christensen.

Balancing goals

The Champions League creates an altogether different challenge for Conte, who complained at the proximity of some fixtures without being in Europe. Conte made winning the Premier League appear easy. Repeating the feat, with rivals Manchester United, Manchester City, Arsenal, Liverpool and Tottenham all sure to strengthen, will be all the more difficult.

Lucky charm

Chelsea midfielder N'Golo Kante appears to be a lucky charm.

The 26-year-old France international - named player of the year by the Professional Footballers' Association and the Football Writers' Association - helped Leicester become Premier League champions last season and has repeated the title success this term with Chelsea.

Here are some other players who have won back-to-back titles with different clubs.

ERIC CANTONA - The enigmatic French forward helped Leeds to the old First Division title in 1992, reclaiming the league trophy they had last won in 1974. He then moved on to Manchester United the following season and starred as the Red Devils won their first top-flight title since 1967 and their first of four with him in the side.

ANDREA PIRLO - The Italy midfielder ended his decade at AC Milan in style by winning the Serie A title in 2011. That was the second occasion he had lifted the trophy and he did so again with Juventus a year



N'Golo Kante

later. He claimed three more with the Turin club.

ROBERTO BAGGIO - The Italy forward bounced back from his harrowing World Cup penalty miss against Brazil in 1994 by winning Serie A with Juventus the following year. He then moved on to AC Milan and won it again in 1996.

MICHAEL LAUDRUP - Having won the Spanish league in each of the previous four seasons with Barcelona, Danish great Laudrup saw his run continue for another year after making the controversial switch to arch rivals Real Madrid in 1994.

ZLATAN IBRAHIMOVIC - The Swede has achieved this feat a number of times in his trophy-laden career, although two of them involve Juventus' revoked Serie A wins of 2005 and 2006. Either side of those seasons, he claimed league titles with Ajax and Inter Milan. He also won successive titles with Inter Milan in 2009, Barcelona in 2010 and AC Milan in 2011.

SAINTS



Should he stay -

from page 15

After the Arsenal game I thought we'd been the better team until the first goal and had put in a half decent display but listening to the crowd on the way out, the phone ins on Solent and chatting in the kebab house I was quite shocked by the level of anti Puel feeling that now exists. I've not seen us this anti a manager in quite a long time.

Seedhouse the Unrepentant

I'm a bit torn on this one. I'm not sure Puel deserves to lose his job, but I can understand why some fans are not happy; especially those who paid a not inconsiderable amount on season tickets to watch us pass the ball sideways a lot.

He got us to a cup final, which we were unlucky to lose, has navigated an arduous fixture list and the loss of our two best central defenders pretty well and has given some youngsters a bit of game time. Also, even if we'd somehow repeated the best season we've ever had in the Premier League (not likely, given how bad some 'big' teams were last season), the likelihood is we'd not have finished any higher than 7th this season and 8th is still a possibility. All things considered, he's done okay.

BUT there is no getting around the lack of goals (and entertainment) at home this season. A bit of conservatism away from home isn't a bad thing and our away record is not far off last season's, but I don't understand why we play the same way at home. Is Puel just negative? Nice's home record from the season before Puel joined us suggests not (they averaged nearly 3 goals a game), so why play that way?

If he stays, he's going to have to do something about it because if there's one thing guaranteed to make a football club's board take action it's money, and if season ticket sales drop because of the style of play we're serving up, Claude will be saying au revoir.

SuperMoff

I think our new owners will probably want their own man in charge if the takeover takes place.

Had Puel continued with an exciting brand of football then I am convinced he would start next season.

Eighth in the table and a cup final would seem like a logical reason to keep him!

However Puel has served up some pretty dire football at times this season and I am sure the current board are aware of the decline under his leadership.

Many on this site might say that would be harsh but just re-



member Nigel Adkins and what he had done for our club before Pochettino replaced him!

Who's to say it couldn't happen again, after all this board had plans for a top four finish.

Saint57

With the uncertainty over future ownership the club will not be looking to replace its manager

nor would any manager of note be interested in joining when the owner, and therefore transfer budget, is unknown. Now is not the right time.

The only two exceptions to this would be if Claude has lost the players, if he has Les will know this. Secondly if sales of season tickets fall off a cliff. Whether you're for or against Claude this

is a commercial entertainment business and if he drives the paying customers away then he will be axed.

Seedhouse the Unrepentant

Cannot make Puel out. Wrecked our Europa run with appalling defensive tactics after great win against Inter, leaving out Fonte and then when the pressure is

SAINTS



or should he go?



they retained possession in the worst game I can remember since MoPo's 'I don't care coz I'm off' loss to Cardiff. Some very poor signings which I think were his choice, being players he's familiar with. I don't want instability but I do want better football. I am more worried about becoming another Chinese province to be honest though.

Crispinmumbles

There is still everything to play for and since our return to the PL there is a possibility that Claude Puel could be the third Saints manager to achieve a top 8 finish. I don't think Les Reed or the board are even thinking about sacking Puel and the majority of Saints fans agree he should be here at the start of next season.

For the next 3 or 4 seasons Everton will be taking over our mantle as a selling club as they have some good youngsters coming through and the good players will want CL football which Everton aren't going to get and the EL next season will hinder them further. 7th place next season is achievable and anything more than that is a bonus.

sodit

The results of this season were predicted in large part by what we did or didn't do last summer. We never signed a good striker and instead relied on what we had and we now see how that has played out. Injuries are a part of the game and teams have to build that in to their calculations. I agree that Puel will not get the sack. We are, once again, in a building situation as we await issues such as ownership to be solved. If we are constantly in a building phase, does that not eventually define us as a team that could promise more, but never does?

DisplacedFan

Bottom line we should be getting behind the club and the manager as the last thing we need is another new manager with all the uncertainty that brings.

Chapperall

Claude has earned at least another year as Saints boss, in fact the Board should pay him a handsome bonus.

He's done better in the PL than half the other managers and sits close behind the clubs who think nothing of splashing the cost of ALL the Saints squad, on one or two players.

Many of the players who, for example, Arsenal, Spurs, Man U, Liverpool, splash their millions on, have been developed from scratch by SFC, for nothing.

Continued on page 18

Key numbers

Chelsea have clinched the Premier League title by beating West Brom. Here, the Sports Pink reviews their dominant season in numbers.

13

the club-record winning run that took Chelsea from eighth in the table at the end of September, with speculation over manager Antonio Conte's future after only half a dozen games, to top spot and looking unassailable.

3-4-3

the formation to which Conte switched to spark the turnaround.

16

clean sheets for the Blues, behind only Tottenham with 17. Ten of Chelsea's shut-outs came in that long winning run.

29

games won, which is more than any team in the top flight.

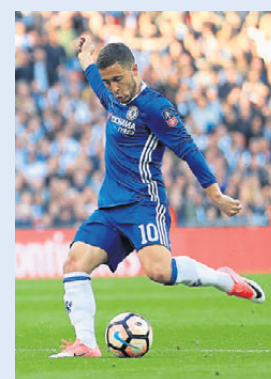
5

defeats, the third-best record - behind Spurs and United.

20

Diego Costa's goal tally, making him the Premier League's third-highest scorer.

80



Eden Hazard.

the club's goals total is the highest in the league.

4

Antonio Conte has now won the league title in his last four seasons as a club manager, having lifted the Serie A trophy three years running with Juventus before leaving to manage Italy.

6

midfielder Cesc Fabregas now has an unmatched six seasons with at least 10 Premier League assists.

0

red cards for Chelsea players in league games this season.

2

players to have appeared in every Chelsea league game this term - Gary Cahill and Cesar Azpilicueta.

3,240

Azpilicueta has played every minute of the campaign.

15

league goals scored by Eden Hazard, compared to only four in 2015/16.

really on waits 5 games of turgid displays to blood Caçeres who has class and plays him with Pied for 90 minutes and a total of 7 changes!!!

If that wasn't a gamble then what is. Tell Hazard to give up being a comedian as he said Puel was up with the best like Jose M and Benitez - what planet is he on. But the board will accept that

with injuries and new to PL football he will be here next season for more defensive French tactics - stay away and save a lot of hard earned cash until it changes!

BarrieG

I definitely think Claude has done enough to deserve a second season in charge. However he clearly needs to address our in-

ability to score enough goals. I would sell JRod and Long, buy another goal scorer and bring Sam back from Blackburn.

Poole Tom

I don't really know what to think. EFL final, OK but I can't forget sitting right next to the WBA fans as they sung 'we've got the ball', on the 5 occasions

Five Ajax starlets to look out for

Dutch giants Ajax will face Manchester United in the Europa League final in Stockholm next Wednesday.

While the English club have employed a blend of youth and experience to reach the showpiece, Ajax's progression has largely been thanks to a talented squad of youngsters.

Here, the Sports Pink picks out five up-and-coming players to watch from the Amsterdam club's line-up.

KASPER DOLBERG (19) - Danish forward Dolberg, blessed with finishing and dribbling ability, was propelled into the first team following Viktor Fischer's departure for Middlesbrough and he has made the most of the opportunity.

His 15-goal haul in the Eredivisie included a hat-trick against NEC and he notched five times in five matches as Ajax ran Feyenoord close in the title race.

BERTRAND TRAORE (21) - Premier League champions Chelsea did not need the tricky Traore this season but their impressive campaign might well have been even more entertaining had he been let loose at Stamford Bridge.

The man from Burkina Faso has enjoyed a breakthrough year on loan



Saints v Newcastle Delap

in Holland, firing 13 goals from midfield as well as acting as a defence-splitting force. He scored twice in the 4-1 semi-final thrashing of Lyon.

DAVINSON SANCHEZ (20) - Imposing Colombian centre-back Davinson has reportedly captured the imagination of Barcelona and Paris SG with his performances in his first season in Europe, and it is not hard to see why. Ajax's player of the year has drawn comparisons to Dutch defensive great Jaap Stam - he can play the ball with his feet, suffers no nonsense in the penalty box and even has a goal in him, as evidenced by his overhead kick against AZ in April.

DAVID NERES (20) - Neres is a relatively new arrival, joining for a hefty 12million euro fee in January, but all the signs indicate he will be a big star.

The Brazilian forward plays like Luis Suarez, who made his name in Amsterdam. He scored on his first three starts for Ajax and presents a major threat from the right wing, too.

JUSTIN KLUIVERT (18) - The son of former Ajax favourite Patrick not only has the name but has proved he has the talent to live up to it. Patrick's heir is not a lethal number nine, however - he is an out-and-out winger. Has typically been used as a sub in the Eredivisie and in Europe.

SAINTS

Debate raging

from page 17

At the same time he has taken us to the EFL Final, without conceding a goal, where most informed neutral critics said that we were unlucky to lose, in fact most would agree that we were robbed!

He's done this, NEW to the Saints, NEW to the PL, NEW to the country, having taken over a depleted squad, having to undergo a difficult learning curve made more difficult by fixture congestion either by Euro fixtures, EFL fixtures (a victim of his own success) and long term injuries to key players.

Tebourba

He has still served up dire football. A tactical policy of trying to negate top 6 teams instead of having a go at them. He is personally responsible for the Europa fiasco. Everything has gone backwards this season. Another summer of sales and it's relegation with this coaching set-up next year.

techsture

Must agree with what seems to be the majority on here and other fans we've spoken to throughout this season that Mr Puel has helped serve up some dire performances, apart from the league cup final and a couple of games I can remember.

Yes we've had our fair of injury problems this term that did contribute to the lack of decent players he had to choose from but in some games the team selection was bewildering to say the least. I'm sort of sat on the fence whether he should be replaced as he's now had a good look at what he's got following all the rotation he's implemented this season and should now know who he needs and who he doesn't.

It might be completely different if he has his own hand-picked squad for next season as long as the club back him and get the players he want in and the ones he doesn't out. He's only had one season and did get the tactics and team right for the Liverpool cup games when it mattered which must show he's got something to offer.

Maybe give him next season with his own squad and who knows?

J7- 7th Junction

To the 'Puel out' brigade craving a 'Return to Entertainment', you'd better wake up and smell the coffee, esp. those renewing.

Whether he stays or goes (I think there's a good case for him staying) at Saints there can be no return to English-style 120mph blood and thunder or 'Entertainment'. This has no part in the



Claude Puel and his Saints team watch Manchester United lift the League Cup at Wembley after a thrilling final.

masterplan for success set by the Board and Les Reed - all Saints teams must play in a progressive style based on passing and movement. This is what has kept us going while the Sunderlands and Newcastle have been dumped out of the PL.

Reality is Reed was never a fan of English style football and long ago learned the lessons of all the

top European countries. As FA Technical Director, Reed produced a ten year 'Club England' plan based on scientific preparation, consistency, and continuity and proposed the National Football Centre, mothballed for a decade under Brooking. Under Reed, academies launched and England Youth won tournaments and a picture emerged which had eve-

rything to do with player development and skill. When Les Reed left the FA had gone from 13th in European Youth Development to joint first with Spain.

At Saints, Reed's remit and the Liebherr vision is working. Even if Claude leaves, no new manager will make changes to the backroom staff, and the footballing philosophy from academy to first



SAINTS



over Puel future



team will remain the same.

At Saints successive managers do not change the strategy so players will not have to re-learn or re-adapt. All teams play in a consistent way at all age groups. Managers are appointed because he buys into the strategy, not because he is expected to revolutionize it.

alexanderthesaint

Interesting post indeed and not the first time i've heard the one system plan for all the teams being talked about.

I think that's how it should be run but you appear to be suggesting that its not in puel's remit to change style.

It would indicate that he's running the team with one hand behind

his back.

As for the 120mph high pressure football, I'm just watching spurs outplay and out fight Man Utd and they've been playing high intensity stuff all year so it can be done.

Oh and spurs have one of the lowest rotation rates in the prem.

andsaint

It seems to me that Monsieur Puel has gone progressively backwards in his style of play as the season has gone on. Clearly the EFL was a highlight, but I'd challenge any team to be negative in that atmosphere! On this note you can see why so many Saints fans are hankering after a fresh approach and a return to the 'Southampton Way,' whatever that is/was! Good marketing at any rate.

However, if you speak to a cross section of fans across the Premier League and tell them you want the Puel sacked, they will mostly laugh and point to a potential eighth placed finish on the back of another summer of turmoil.

In this respect, we have done so well yet again but in a season of VERY average PL teams outside the top six we could, and should, have had so many more points imo.

So we have this complex set of circumstances. I actually think that the last thing we need is a another summer crisis and if we keep the current crop (minus the obvious deadwood and VVD) and add to it, then Puel will have all the tools in his armoury to have a 'right good go' next season - but he won't get long from the fans to get it right....

Valais Saints

Surely the final arbiters on whether Puel is doing a good job or not are the Northam faithful. Have attended all home matches this season but not once have I heard them chant his name. Draw your own conclusions.

STRicky44

We have a manager with the guts to build. Claude Puel has rotated, brought on youth, given all his guys a fair go and has been let down by injury at crucial times. It's attacking forwards we lack. We're blunt and have been for ages.

We'll probably keep the new guys Boufal and Redmond but Shane and Jay may move over for a returning Sam Gallagher and maybe two new attackers. We live n hope. UTS

Tirau Dan

The attacking, scoring striker is a rare commodity everywhere, and even then they do it in clusters. The timing is key, as it was for us with SRL and more recently Gabbiadini.

The surprise for me has been the paucity from midfield and elsewhere, and that has probably been down to some bad luck (with injuries etc) but mainly lack of form and our formation, and both of those responsibilities sit squarely at the door of the man who picks the team, surely?

Louie Esteem

FA get tough

Some players could be left to sweat after the FA voted in favour of introducing retrospective bans for players who dive or feign injury from next season.

From Rivaldo's theatrical grasp of the wrong part of his anatomy, to ex-Saint Gordon Watson's ludicrously delayed topple in the Leeds box, the game has seen it all.

Here the Sports Pink picks out some of the more extreme examples of simulation which would be ripe for punishment under the FA's new rules:

RIVALDO (2002)

The Barcelona star collapsed clutching his face late in his country's World Cup clash with Turkey in 2002 - despite Turkey's Hakan Unsal having kicked the ball at his leg while he was waiting to take a corner. FIFA fined a resolutely non-contrite Rivaldo a trifling £5,180, but decided not to suspend him. He said: "I'm not sorry about anything. Obviously the ball didn't hit me in the face, but I was still the victim."

SLAVEN BILIC (1998)

Bilic denied France hero Laurent Blanc the chance to play in his home World Cup final after his dramatic response to a bit of shirt-tugging in their last four clash. Late in the game, Bilic went down holding his face, prompting the Spanish referee to issue Blanc the only red card of his career. Replays showed contact was dubious.



Gordon Watson

Years later Bilic insisted: "It wasn't like Mike Tyson, but I was struck. I panicked and collapsed."

GORDON WATSON (1992)

Leeds were cruising to victory at Sheffield Wednesday when Chris Whyte went to sweep the ball away from Watson in the box and the Owls star hesitated, had a long think, then flipped to the ground, winning a penalty from which Wednesday would briefly reduce the deficit. Watson was held up to ridicule, and admitted much later: "It's the most disgraceful dive you'll ever see. It was the fact I took a step before going down. I over-egged it."

KYLE LAFFERTY (2009)

When Lafferty and Aberdeen's Charlie Mulgrew squared up on the touchline during their Scottish Premier League clash in 2009, the Rangers man went down as if he had been Glasgow-kissed - not, as replays would clearly show - air-kissed. Mulgrew was sent off, but such was the resulting furore that Lafferty was fined and reprimanded by his club, forced to issue a fulsome apology, and banned for two matches by the SFA.

Reading on the brink

Reading are one match away from a return to the Premier League after beating Fulham in the play-off semi-finals.

Here, the Sports Pink assesses how ready they are for the top flight, should they make it.

STRENGTHS - Reading's home form has been key to their success this season. The Royals have won 17 matches - including the play-off success over Fulham - and lost just twice at the Madejski Stadium. An organised defence, built around captain Paul McShane and Liam Moore, has by and large stood firm in front of goalkeeper Ali Al Habsi, who like a fine wine has improved with age and was named the club's player of the year. Proven Championship performer Yann Kermorgant has excelled up front with 19 goals.

WEAKNESSES - On the road the Royals have been prone to the odd capitulation. As well as 4-1 defeats at Newcastle and Brentford, there was a 5-0 drubbing at Fulham and a bizarre 7-1 thrashing at Norwich. All of which would go a long way to explaining a goal difference of just plus four. Boss Jaap Stam will be aware that Premier League teams will be even more ruthless when they see a team on the ropes. Kermorgant aside, the goals-for column will need improving too.



Jaap Stam

MANAGER - Stam was a surprise choice when he was appointed last summer in his first senior management role. Although the Dutchman brought in compatriots Danzell Gravenberch, Joey van den Berg and Roy Beerens, his key signings were English - centre-half Moore from Leicester and former Southampton Tyro League midfielder John Swift from Chelsea have been pivotal this season. A renowned defender with Holland, Manchester United and Lazio, Stam should be able to attract even better players in the top flight.

TACTICS - Stam's reliance on a possession-based game, with goalkeeper and defenders playing the ball out from the back, actually drew criticism from sections of the fans early in the season as his players struggled to adapt.

OVERALL - There is no doubt Reading will need new faces in the summer if they are to compete in the top flight. A striker to take some of the burden off veteran Kermorgant is a must, and an old head at the back would be a useful addition - John Terry anyone? But if the club's new Chinese owners are willing to invest, then Stam's pulling power and tactical nous could see the Royals stay up. In fact, Reading's main worry may be whether they can keep hold of their manager.

NOSTALGIA



Can Saints sign

Simon Carter



SAINTS were this weekend wrapping up their 2016/17 Premier League campaign at home to Stoke City.

Here, the Sports Pink looks back at the clubs' post-war league encounters at The Dell and St Mary's.

April 8, 1961

Saints 0 Stoke 1 - John Page missed a penalty as struggling Stoke claimed a shock win at the Dell. Jackie Mudie scored the only goal in the 72nd minute - a vital winner as his side finished fifth from bottom of the Division 2 table, only three points ahead of relegated Pompey.

April 28, 1962

Saints 5 Stoke 1 - Only 9,558 were present at The Dell to see Ted Bates' Saints hammer the Potters in the final game of the Division 2 campaign. After Dennis Viollet had given the visitors an early lead, Saints levelled through Brian Clifton's 25-yard strike before forwards Derek Reeves and George O'Brien both netted twice.

May 22, 1963

Saints 2 Stoke 0 - For the second season running, Saints hosted Stoke on the final day of the season.

And, for the second season running, they won. And this time against a Potters side who had already been crowned Division 2 champions.

Terry Paine struck both goals in front of a much improved crowd from 12 months earlier - this time 18,298 being present at The Dell.

Nov 5, 1966

Saints 3 Stoke 2 - Saints raced into a 3-0 half-time lead in the first top flight game between the two clubs at The Dell.

Terry Paine opened the scoring on four minutes and Ron Davies struck twice in the 35th and 44th minutes - his 14th and 15th league goals of the season.

Dennis Viollet and John Ritchie replied for the Potters in the second half.

Feb 3, 1968

Saints 1 Stoke 2 - Gordon Banks pulled off a series of fine saves to deny Saints. Harry Burrows and Calvin Palmer put Stoke in command before Ron Davies bagged an 89th minute consolation.

Aug 28, 1968



Saints 2 Stoke 0 - Terry Paine and Mick Channon gave Saints victory in a season where they finished a then club record seventh in the top flight. Stoke finished fourth bottom.

Dec 27, 1969

Saints 0 Stoke 0 - a crowd of 23,215 turned up to see Saints ex-

tend their winless Division 1 run to 20 games. Despite that miserable run, they still avoided the drop.

Jan 30, 1971

Saints 2 Stoke 1 - Brian O'Neil gave Saints an early lead and, after Jimmy Greenhoff had levelled, Ron Davies headed a second

half winner.

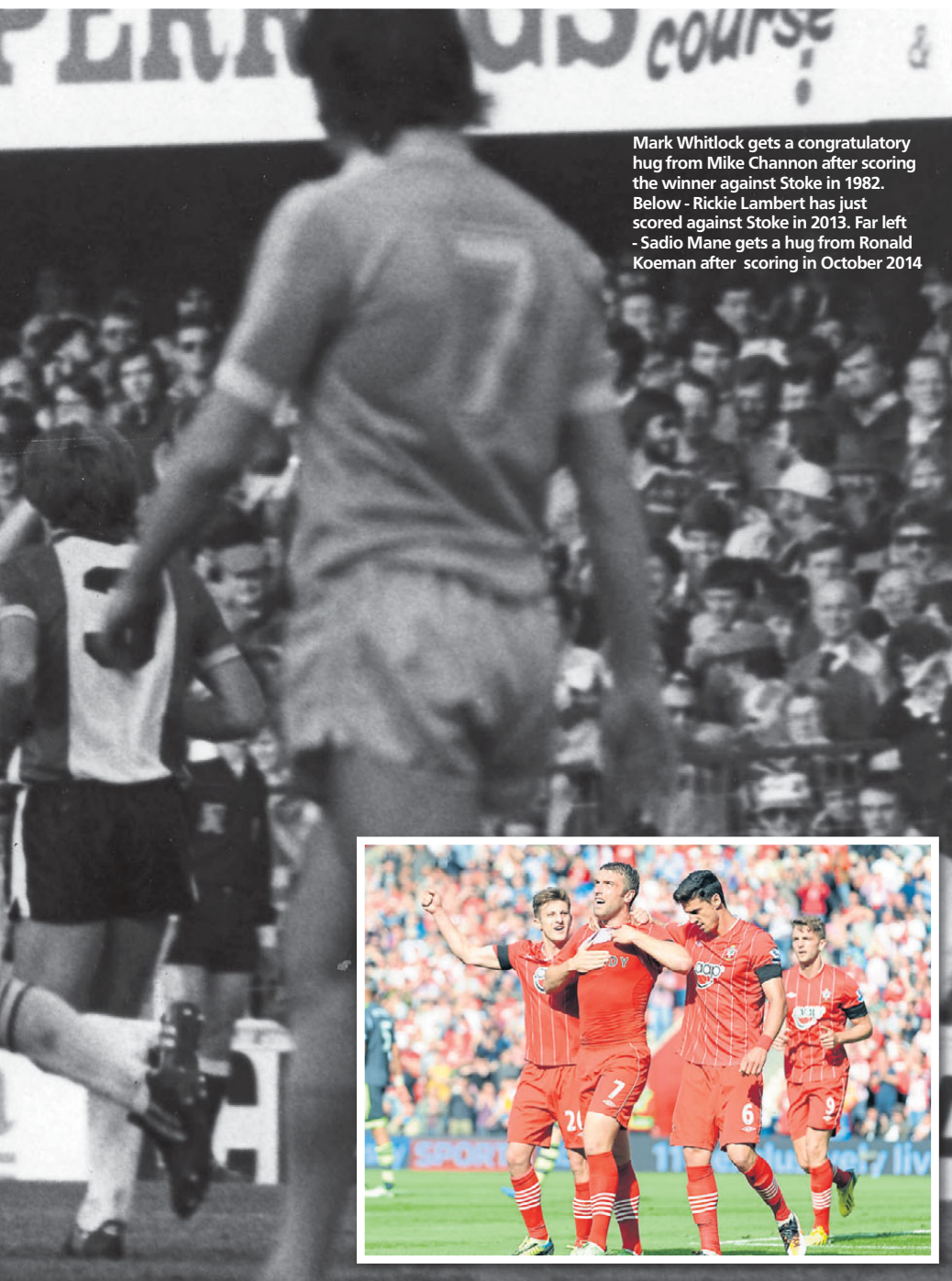
Aug 17, 1971

Saints 3 Stoke 1 - Mick Channon opened the scoring on eight minutes in Saints' first home game of the season. A Dennis Smith own goal doubled the lead and Bobby Stokes added a third before Jimmy Greenhoff's consolation.

NOSTALGIA



off in style?



Mark Whitlock gets a congratulatory hug from Mike Channon after scoring the winner against Stoke in 1982. Below - Rickie Lambert has just scored against Stoke in 2013. Far left - Sadio Mane gets a hug from Ronald Koeman after scoring in October 2014

Aug 15, 1972

Saints 1 Stoke 0 - For the second year running, Saints hosted the Potters in their opening home match. And, for the second year running, Mick Channon opened the scoring in the first half. This time, though, it was the only goal.

Oct 10, 1973

Saints 3 Stoke 0 - Saints stormed into a 2-0 lead inside eight minutes through Terry Paine and Bobby Stokes. The latter added a second on the stroke of half-time.

Dec 31, 1977

Saints 1 Stoke 0 - Phil Boyer

grabbed the only goal as Saints moved back into the Division 2 promotion places. They would stay there for the remainder of the season.

Dec 1, 1979

Saints 3 Stoke 1 - Mick Channon and Phil Boyer both scored in the last three minutes to give

Saints a dramatic victory. Boyer had opened the scoring earlier on with Sammy Irvine levelling.

Oct 11, 1980

Saints 1 Stoke 2 - Charlie George's penalty gave Saints an interval lead, but the Potters hit back through Iain Munro and Peter Hampton.

Mar 27, 1982

Saints 4 Stoke 3 - A rare goal-laden thriller between the two clubs at The Dell.

Lawrie McMenemy's side stormed into a 3-0 lead on 33 minutes through Malcolm Waldron, David Armstrong and Mick Channon. But back came Stoke through Alan Biley, ex-Saints defender Dave Watson and Sammy McLroy to level at 3-3.

Saints' winner four minutes from time came from an unlikely source - centre half Mark Whitlock's only goal of his 61-game career for the club.

Dec 4, 1982

Saints 1 Stoke 0 - Paul Bracewell was dismissed for the Potters in the first half, but Saints had to wait until 16 minutes from time for their winner - which came from Danny Wallace.

Dec 3, 1983

Saints 3 Stoke 1 - Almost 12 months later to the day, Saints fell behind to a Leighton James goal. But the hit back through Danny Wallace, David Armstrong and Mick Mills. The latter was to later join Stoke as a player and later became their manager.

Mar 16, 1985

Saints 0 Stoke 0 - A shock result, as Stoke finished rock bottom of the top flight - winning just three games out of 42, drawing eight and losing a staggering 31, picking up just 17 points.

Oct 29, 2005

Saints 2 Stoke 0 - Theo Walcott scored on his first league start at St Mary's with Stoke reduced to 10 men before half-time when Marlon Broomes was sent off. Harry Redknapp's men added a second late on through Djamel Belmadi.

Oct 21, 2006

Saints 1 Stoke 0 - Mario Licka's only goal for the club settled this encounter.

Aug 25, 2007

Saints 3 Stoke 2 - After ex-Saint Ricardo Fuller had put Stoke in front, Saints hit back through Andrew Surman, Grzegorz Rasiak and Jhon Viazara.

Continued on page

Terriers at Wembley

Huddersfield are one game away from a first promotion to the Premier League following their penalty shootout win against Sheffield Wednesday.

In his first full season in charge, head coach David Wagner steered the Terriers to a fifth-placed finish in the Championship and victory over Reading in the final at Wembley on May 29 would see them back in the top flight for the first time in 45 years.

Here, we look at Huddersfield's strengths and weaknesses.

STRENGTHS - Wagner drafted in 12 new first-team players during the summer but quickly instilled a sense of identity and unity in his squad. Both the German and Michael Hefele, man of the match in the second leg at Hillsborough, put success down to the team's never-say-die approach.

Wagner's high-pressing philosophy, built on boundless energy, allied to meticulous organisation makes his side difficult to beat, while midfield pair Aaron Mooy and Jonathan Hogg, forward Izzy Brown and strike pair Nahki Wells and Elias Kachunga have proven quality.

WEAKNESSES - When on song, Huddersfield's 'gegenpressing' style proved too much for opponents this season, as illustrated by wins over the likes of Newcastle, Brighton, Reading and Leeds (twice).

But when they get it wrong, Wagner's



David Wagner

side can capitulate. Two heavy defeats to Fulham and another at Bristol City revealed they are vulnerable if energy levels slip.

MANAGER - The appointment of Wagner has proved a masterstroke by chairman Dean Hoyle. The German has revolutionised the club's footballing philosophy, both on and off the pitch, and his summer acquisitions have turned the team into a genuine force.

Permanent signings Christopher Schindler, Chris Lowe and Hefele provide know-how and are the bedrock in defence, striker Elias Kachunga finished as leading scorer with 13 goals, while loan signings Mooy, Brown and goalkeeper Danny Ward have all been instrumental in Town's success.

TACTICS - Gegenpressing (or counter-pressing) requires that the ball must be won back high up the pitch as soon as possession is lost.

OVERALL - Any team promoted to the Premier League must invest in new high-calibre players if they are to compete at the top level and Huddersfield are no different.

Much will depend on whether the likes of Mooy, Brown and Ward can be persuaded to turn their loans into permanent moves and if not, on the quality of their replacements.

SAINTS



Failure to connect cost Walter

Watford have announced that Walter Mazzarri will step down as the club's manager at the end of the season.

The 55-year-old Italian, formerly the manager of Inter Milan and Napoli, leaves the Hornets after just one year in charge.

Here, the Sports Pink examines the key questions behind his departure.

Was the writing on the wall?

Mazzarri's predecessor Quirque Sanchez Flores was shown the door at Watford despite guiding them to 13th in their first season back in the Premier League since 2008. They also reached the semi-finals of the FA Cup, too. Mazzarri was given the assurance of a three-year contract, but although he recorded a 3-1 victory against Manchester United in September following a promising start, Watford struggled for consistency throughout Mazzarri's campaign. Indeed they host Manchester City on Sunday on the back of five consecutive defeats.

How will he be remembered at Watford?

Mazzarri, who spoke through an



Walter Mazzarri

interpreter despite taking English lessons, will rue a host of injuries to his squad. But, in truth, his failure to connect with either the players or the club's supporters during his ill-fated time in charge was the main contributor to his downfall. His negative tactics did not endear him to the Vicarage Road faithful either, while club captain Troy Deeney, hugely popular with the Watford supporters, has been in and out of the side in recent weeks.

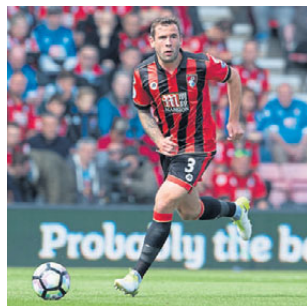
Will the players be sad to see him go?

It is no secret that Mazzarri was largely unpopular within the dressing room following his hard-line training methods, limited grasp of English, and the recent axing of Deeney. Indeed the news that he will not be in charge next season emerged after it was claimed that a host of key players would quit if the Italian did not leave.

Why does the Pozzo family have such a rapid turnover of managers?

Mazzarri is the seventh manager to be hired - and then fired - since the Pozzo family took over the club in 2012. The Pozzos' cut-throat approach, although widely criticised, will however, see Watford play in the Premier League for a third successive season next term, while they have poured millions of their own money into the club, too.

Cook: I want to stay here for years to come



Steve Cook.

STEVE Cook admitted he had been flattered by interest from other clubs - but insisted he planned to stay with Cherries for "years to come".

Cook - once on loan to Eastleigh during his younger days at Brighton - has been a colossal presence at the heart of his team's defence this season. If he starts and finishes the match at Leicester on Sunday he will have played every minute of Cherries' Premier League campaign. And the supporters who voted him as their player of the year are, apparently, not alone in recognising Cook's towering influence.

The 26-year-old, who has two years remaining on the Vitality Stadium

contract he penned 12 months ago, has reportedly caught the eye of Everton, West Brom, Newcastle and Watford.

Cook said: "I don't really pay attention to that. I love playing for this club, it's as simple as that. I don't know what the summer holds but I'm sure something will be sorted.

"Those sort of rumours are nice but I'm happy here."

Cook added: "I don't know. It's difficult to say. The lads who have played all season have shown how committed they are to the club.

"I love living here and I love playing under the manager.

"Until the club stops growing, which I'm

sure it won't, then I'd love to play for Bournemouth and Eddie for years to come."

Cherries paid a paltry £170,000 to sign Cook from Brighton in 2012, following an initial two-month loan spell.

He was an instrumental figure in the club's rise from League One and Howe considers him a future England international.

With Cherries having bettered last season's 16th place, Cook is aware that even more will be demanded of his side next term.

"Our expectations will be higher next year," he added. "Neither the club nor the players have stood still."

No pressure to sell crown jewels

Echo reporters

NEITHER south coast Premier League club are under pressure to sell their crown jewels this summer.

Saints chairman Ralph Krueger this week said the club do not need to sell anyone - including star defender Virgil van Dijk.

And Cherries manager Eddie Howe was singing from a similar hymn sheet when he admitted 'we are under no pressure to sell' - inform Joshua King or Steve Cook.

Krueger's message to the St Mary's faithful was clear: "We don't need to sell, and if we do it's only because we think it's the right thing to do?"

"Whether the ownership changes or not, it is not going to change our strategic position.

We have a strategy which is being fine-tuned but the base is in place.

Poised

We are pre-positioned for the transfer window and we do not have to sell any player:

"That will be our decision and whether it is in the best interests of the club or not."

It is believed Chelsea are poised with a £50m bid for van Dijk once the summer transfer window opens.

Though the player is on a long term contract, it could be argued that a £50m offer represents good business for a player the club only bought for £13m less than two years ago.

Providing that money is re-in-



Crown jewels - Josh King (top) and Virgil van Dijk (above right).

vested in new players, the majority of realistic Saints fans would probably admit £50m is a sum the club cannot really turn down.

Howe, meanwhile, believes

keeping intact the current Cherries squad will present the club with its "biggest challenge" during the summer.

King - last season's leading

marksman with six goals - has plundered no fewer than 16 for Cherries this time round, including 12 in his past 14 games.

The Norwegian frontman, snapped up by Howe for just £1m from Blackburn, is one of the most prolific strikers in Europe in the calendar year and also has a couple of international goals to his name.

Steve Cook, the Bournemouth Echo-Micky Cave supporters' player of the year, has been a model of consistency and has already been linked with other clubs.

The defender, a bargain £175,000 buy from Brighton in 2012, has also been touted as a future England player, as has the versatile Adam Smith - another leading light during an historic campaign which will see the club secure its highest league position.

Midfielder Harry Arter is another player whose stock had risen, while Ryan Fraser has earned international recognition with Scotland after bursting on to the scene in December.

Howe said: "For a club of our size, keeping players who are performing so well in the Premier League will be our biggest challenge this summer, probably more so than any other.

"But we have ambitious plans. We don't want to lose our best players, we want to bring in more.

"I believe we can keep all our players and we are under no pressure to sell.

"I would like to think the players are happy here and are part of a team that is enjoying the ride we are on.

"We don't want it to end. We want to continue to keep growing and we believe we can achieve special things."

SAINTS



Saints v Stoke - a post-war home history



Ex-Saint Peter Crouch celebrates his goal in February 2014.

from page 21

Jon Parkin set up a tense finale, in a season which ended with Stoke promoted to the Premier League and Saints just avoiding relegation to League 1.

May 19, 2013

Saints 1 Stoke 1 - Ex-Saint Peter Crouch opened the scoring just after half-time on the final day of the Premier League season,

with Rickie Lambert leveling 10 minutes later.

Feb 8, 2014

Saints 2 Stoke 2 - All the goals came in the first half, with Saints twice leading through Rickie Lambert and Steve Davis and the visitors levelling through Peter Odemwingie and Peter Crouch.

Oct 25, 2014

Saints 1 Stoke 0 - A week

after blasting eight goals past Sunderland at St Mary's, Saints had to settle for just one this time - Sadio Mane bagging his first goal for the club.

Nov 21, 2015

Saints 0 Stoke 1 - It wasn't always great entertainment for Saints under Ronald Koeman, and here Bojan Krkic's 10th-minute decider settled a grim game.

Howe: We've got to be good enough

**Paul
McNamara**

EDDIE Howe says he and fellow elite English managers must prove they are "good enough" to manage in the Premier League to "change perceptions" of home-grown bosses.

It is 25 years since an Englishman won the title in this country - Howard Wilkinson with Leeds in 1992.

And former national team boss Steve McClaren, who won the Dutch championship with FC Twente seven years ago, has claimed this week that English managers had a "bad image" among their foreign counterparts.

Howe accepted he and his five fellow English Premier League bosses had a responsibility to show they were a match for their foreign adversaries.

Long time

He said "It's a long time since an English manager has won the Premier League.

"That's something I'd certainly like to change in the future.

"But I think it's up to us guys who get an opportunity in the Premier League to make a success of the job. And to prove we are good enough.

"You have to do the job as well as you can to change perceptions, so, hopefully, we can do that.

"A lot of foreign managers have been recruited into the Premier League, which I think is great for the profile of the league and quality of the teams - and the qual-



Eddie Howe.

ity of coaching has improved because of them.

"I have no problem with the best coming in, because I think that's what the Premier League stands

for. The challenge, then, is for everyone else to grow with it and try to adapt to the demands.

"I consider myself in the group having to prove we are good

enough to manage in the Premier League."

Howe went on his latest fact-finding mission recently, spending time watching La Liga outfit Real Sociedad at work, following previous trips to other foreign clubs, including Athletic Bilbao and Italian pair Fiorentina and Empoli.

"I like to experience something different every year," said Howe. "A different league, culture, way of training and developing players. It is good to see how other teams work and I was very impressed by them. I wouldn't know how English managers are viewed abroad. I go out there to watch and listen, and to speak to people and develop relationships.

"I hope it's not another 25 years before an English manager wins the league. I want the English national team to be successful and I'd like an Englishman to lead them to those successes.

"That means you need good coaches and managers."

At present, there are only five English managers in the Premier League.

Howe is the longest serving of them all, having been appointed in October 2012. That actually makes him the sixth longest serving manager in the top four divisions.

Burnley's Sean Dyche is the seventh longest server, having been appointed a fortnight after Howe left Turf Moor to return to Bournemouth.

Sam Allardyce and Paul Clement were appointed Crystal Palace and Swansea manager just after last Christmas, while the fifth Englishman - Steve Agnew - has overseen Middlesbrough's relegation.

Watford ins and outs

Watford are seeking their ninth manager in just five years after it was announced that Walter Mazzarri would take charge of his final game on Sunday.

Mazzarri was the seventh manager hired by the Pozzo family following their takeover of the club back in 2012.

Here is how Mazzarri and his predecessors have fared under the Pozzo regime.

Gianfranco Zola (July 2012 - December 2013)

The Chelsea legend was named as Sean Dyche's replacement within days of the Pozzo takeover. Took Watford to third in the Championship and the play-off final at Wembley in his first season only to lose to Crystal Palace after extra-time. Zola survived the summer, but resigned in December with Watford 13th in the second tier having lost five consecutive home league matches.

Giuseppe Sannino (December 2013 - August 2014)

The Italian had an instant impact leading Watford to a club record run of six home league victories without conceding a goal. He won four of his first five matches in charge of the ensuing season, but resigned on August 31 amid reports of dressing-room unrest.



Slavisa Jokanovic

Oscar Garcia Junyent (Sept 2014)

Oscar was admitted to hospital with chest pains shortly after he was given the job at Vicarage Road. The Spaniard stepped down two weeks later after just four games in charge.

Billy McKinlay (September 2014 - October 2014)

Was appointed as Watford's first-team coach in the closing days of Oscar's reign. He lasted just eight days and two matches before he was replaced.

Slavisa Jokanovic (October 2014 - June 2015)

The former Chelsea midfielder guided the Hornets back to the Premier League with one match to spare. But the Serbian failed to agree a new contract and was soon on his way out.

Quique Sanchez Flores (June 2015 - May 2016)

Appointed as the man to retain Watford's Premier League status, but was given his marching orders despite an impressive campaign in which the Hornets finished 13th and reached the semi-finals of the FA Cup.

Walter Mazzarri (May 2016 - May 2017)

Signed a three-year deal at Watford, but it was this week confirmed he would part company with the Hornets after just one term in charge.

Novak's numbers

As Novak Djokovic turns 30 on Monday, the Sports Pink reviews the Serbian star's career in numbers.

67

ATP singles titles won.

12

Grand slam titles (6 Australian, 3 Wimbledon, 2 US, 1 French).

4

he held all four Grand Slam titles after his 2016 French Open win, only the third man in history to achieve that feat after Don Budge and Rod Laver.

6

Djokovic's half-dozen Australian Open titles make for an Open Era record.

43

the longest winning run of his career, across 2010 and 2011 - the third-longest streak in history, only three short of Guillermo Vilas' all-time



Novak Djokovic

record.

\$108,501,204

his career prize money, an all-time record and equivalent to £84,111,470 at current exchange rates.

\$21,646,145

Djokovic also holds the single-season record with his 2015 tally.

11

titles in 2015, the most successful season of his career.

5

titles at the season-ending ATP finals, in 10 appearances.

223

weeks at number one in the world rankings.

5h53m

duration of his 2012 Australian Open final win over Rafael Nadal.

NON LEAGUE

Saluting the two

Rod Sutherland

The Southampton Saturday Football League have just completed another successful season with Drew Smith Group again providing sponsorship.

We hope to keep the same number of divisions next season and are still happy to take late applicants if any teams are looking for Saturday afternoon football.

Any interested clubs should email sotonfl@gmail.com and they will be informed of the process.

There were a few outstanding team performances in 2016/17. There was a treble for Romsey Town Veterans, who won the B Division and the Hampshire FA Cup 5-4 on penalties after a 1-1 draw against Nursling.

Romsey also won the Southampton Divisional FA Veterans Cup, again beating Nursling in the final, this time 2-1. They were also runners up to Gosport in the Veterans League Cup.

Winchester OB were also treble winners, claiming the Veterans Over-40 section, the Veterans Over-40 League Cup (2-0 v Hythe & Dibden) and the Supplementary Vase (2-1 v West End Rovers).

Chamberlayne AFC were Supplementary Trophy victors (4-3 v Warsash Wasps) and in the Trophyman Senior League Cup were 4-0 winners against Nursling.

They also finished runners up in the Premier Division and were the Southampton League's best performers in both the Southampton DFA Senior Cup and Hampshire FA Intermediate Cup.

Compton put their early season struggles behind them to finish third in Junior 1, reach the Hampshire FA Junior A last four and winning the Junior League Cup Final on penalties after a 2-2 draw with FC Independence.

The divisional titles were mostly keenly contested, but with a couple of runaway winners.

BTC Southampton were always well placed to win the Premier, although a shock opening day defeat by promoted (and eventual runners up Chamberlayne AFC) proved a fleeting setback.

A 6-3 victory at Nursling in their last fixture sealed the title for BTC, although they may consider a 3-2 win against Braishfield - after trailing 2-0 - the match that really mattered.

The other promoted outfit, Park Sports, also fared well, though tailed off in the run in.

Senior 1 was always a three-team race between Bishop's Waltham Dynamo, Athletico Romsey and Alderbury, newly



Athletico Romsey.



Bishops Waltham Dynamos.



Nursling Vets

joined from the Salisbury League.

But as the latter two dropped occasional points it proved to be Bishops Waltham Dynamo's year. Following a 4-2 win at Alderbury, the Dynamo's won it with a nervy 1-0 win at bottom team Comrades Reserves.

Athletico grabbed runners up spot with a 2-0 victory over Alderbury. Warsash Wasps pushed

Chamberlayne all the way before falling 4-3 to a late winner in a thrilling Supplementary Trophy final.

Upham Reserves carried on from the previous season, taking on all comers in Junior 1 to become the first team to win a title with a 5-3 victory at fellow promotion hopefuls Capital in early February.

Park Phoenix overtook Capital for the runners up spot and also defeated them in the Southampton FA Junior A final 2-1 at Hamble Club's Shell Mex ground.

Junior 2 winners FC Independence always looked worthy champions with only West Totton able to live with them until inexplicably defaulting their last match, leaving FC Independence to



NON LEAGUE

treble winners



Jose reaches managerial milestone

Jose Mourinho will reach 250 games as a Premier League manager when Manchester United host Crystal Palace on Sunday.

Here, the Sports Pink looks back over Mourinho's record and honours in his eight seasons, which have taken in two spells at Chelsea and now his career at United.

● Mourinho's overall record in the Premier League reads: won 157, drawn 59, lost 33.

● His home record is even more formidable: won 86, drawn 32, lost six. One of those six games was Saints' 3-1 win at Stamford Bridge in October 2015 - the only time Mourinho has lost a league match to Saints.

● That includes a 77-match unbeaten run in home Premier League games from the start of his reign at Chelsea in 2004. He did



Jose Mourinho

not suffer a league defeat at Stamford Bridge until April 19, 2014 when Sunderland claimed a shock 2-1 success.

● He has won the league title on three occasions, in 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2014-15, all with Chelsea.

● The Portuguese was named Premier League manager of the year in those same three seasons. He picked up manager of the month awards in November 2004, January 2005 and March 2007.

● While managing in England, he has also picked up one FA Cup and four League Cups, including winning the latter with United against Saints this season.

● Mourinho was also named coach of the year at the 2005 BBC Sports Personality of the Year awards ceremony.



Compton



FC Independence



Winchester OB.



Upham Reserves.

claim the title in style with a 9-0 mauling of Forest Edge Rovers.

Independence got to the Junior League Cup final but were edged out on penalties by Compton.

Athletico Romsey Reserves had a great season to win Junior 3.

It could have been even better - they were beaten by West End Rovers 4-0 in the Southampton FA B Cup final and fell at the semi

final hurdle to Compton, who won with a late goal in the Junior League Cup semi final.

Long term leaders AFC Testwood ended as runners up.

West End Rovers, as well as winning the Southampton FA B Cup, were runners up to Winchester OB in the Supplementary Vase, going down 2-1.

Athletico Romsey A looked

certain to win Junior 4 and a draw in their last match at struggling Braishfield Res would have sufficed.

All was set with the score 1-1 going into injury time. The trophy was being collected from his car by Southampton League chairman Colin Miles when Braishfield scored a winner.

This left Sporting Wessex as

surprised as anyone to be champions. Athletico were also unlucky to crash out of the Junior League Cup at the semi-final stage, having lead Junior 2 champions FC Independence until the last minute before losing out on penalties.

Hythe Aztec Res and Michelmersh & T A both had seasons to be proud of, finishing third and fourth.

The Veterans A Division also had an exciting finish with Nursling emerging ahead of Sporting BTC - but only just!

Nursling needed a point from their last game to be mathematically sure of the title but lost 1-0 at home to Gosport.

This left Sporting needing a 13-goal margin against bottom of the table Wildern OB.

With half time approaching Wildern led 2-1 and despite a sterling second half performance Sporting were 'only' able to win 12-2.

Romsey Town Veterans won almost all the trophies available to them, including the Veterans B Division, the Hampshire FA and the Southampton FL Vets Cups.

The only exception being the Southampton FA Cup which they lost 2-1 in the final to Gosport - their only loss of the season.

In the league, only Follands gave them a run for their money, but a 5-3 victory at Romsey's adopted home at Sherfield English proved decisive - despite a goal from SDFA Secretary Mike Harvey for Follands.

The Veterans O-40 section saw a clean sweep for Winchester OB.

A 2-0 win against Langley Manor earned the title with three games remaining.

They also took the Veterans O-40 Cup 2-0 against Hythe & Dibden. There was more Cup success for Winchester OB as they defeated West End 2-1 in the Supplementary Vase. *Tables on page 28.*



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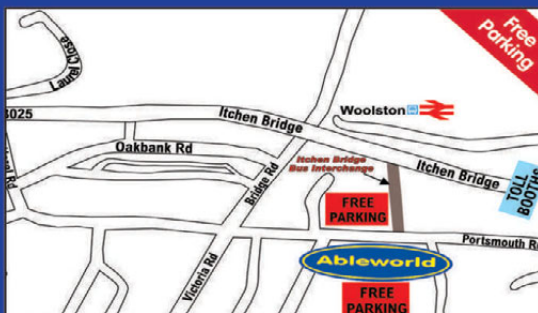
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NON LEAGUE



TABLES

Drew Smith Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BTC Soton	18	15	2	1	65	16	47
Chamberlayne	18	14	0	4	50	21	42
Nursling	18	9	3	6	52	40	30
Gulf Western	18	9	2	7	35	21	29
Park Sports	18	8	5	5	28	22	29
Comrades	18	7	2	9	31	45	23
Braishfield	18	6	4	8	43	45	22
Soton Uni	18	5	2	11	40	52	17
Hedge End	18	4	1	13	29	57	13
Durley	18	2	1	15	26	80	7

Senior 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B Waltham D	14	11	2	1	43	19	35
Ath Romsey	14	10	2	2	34	15	32
Alderbury	14	10	0	4	53	28	30
Montefiore	14	7	1	6	44	34	22
Warsash Wasps	14	6	3	5	35	34	21
Priory Rovers	14	3	2	9	25	33	11
AFC Botley	14	3	0	11	17	50	9
Comrades Res	14	1	0	13	6	44	3

Junior 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Upham Res	14	11	3	0	58	27	36
Park Phoenix	14	9	1	4	37	39	28
Compton	14	8	1	5	51	26	25
Capital	14	8	1	5	46	32	25
Knightwood	14	6	3	5	32	29	21
Langley Manor	14	4	0	10	25	45	12
AFC Phoenix XI	14	3	2	9	31	51	11
Shamblehurst	14	1	1	12	15	46	4

Junior 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Independence	14	11	1	2	60	13	34
West Totton	14	10	1	3	43	20	31
Hamble Utd	14	7	3	4	42	38	24
Soton Medics	14	6	2	6	41	36	20
Forest Edge	14	6	1	7	34	38	19
BTC Soton Res	14	6	1	7	22	35	19
London Airways	14	2	2	10	15	48	8
Durley Res	14	1	1	12	15	44	6

Junior 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ath Romsey Res	14	8	4	2	29	15	28
AFC Testwood	14	8	2	4	37	25	26
Hedge End Res	14	7	4	3	37	28	25
AFC Hiltigbury	14	7	2	5	28	33	23
West End Rovers	14	7	1	6	38	28	22
Hythe Aztecs	14	4	3	7	39	42	15
Nomansland	14	4	0	10	23	48	12
Inmar	14	1	4	9	27	39	7

Junior 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sp Wessex	16	12	0	4	60	20	36
Ath Romsey A	16	12	0	4	55	19	36
Hythe Res	16	10	2	4	54	27	32
Michelmersh	16	10	2	4	47	29	32
Braishfield Res	16	8	2	6	39	33	26
AFC Station	16	7	2	7	37	35	23
Compton Res	16	3	1	12	21	66	10
Hamble Utd Res	16	3	0	13	19	52	9
Botley Village	16	2	1	13	29	80	7

Veterans O35's A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nursling Vets	12	9	0	3	34	7	27
Sporting BTC	12	9	0	3	47	23	27
Gosport FC	12	8	0	4	15	5	24
Redlynch O-35	12	6	1	5	27	17	19
Woolston T&L	12	3	1	8	22	29	10
BTC Soton A	12	2	2	8	12	30	8
Wildern OB	12	2	2	8	18	59	8

Veterans O35's B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Romsey	18	18	0	0	124	17	54
Follands	18	13	2	3	68	18	41
Hiltigbury	18	10	2	6	64	59	32
Priory Rovers	18	8	4	6	37	33	28
Baddesley Park	18	8	2	8	45	47	26
BTC Soton B	18	6	4	8	33	58	22
Compton Vets	18	7	0	11	49	62	21
Redbridge	18	4	3	11	43	82	15
Royal Mail	18	2	5	11	39	71	11
Fawley RBL	18	1	4	13	35	90	7

Veterans O-40

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Winchester OB	18	16	0	2	79	18	48
BTC Soton O40s	18	13	2	3	73	36	41
Sp BTC O-40	18	11	2	5	60	44	35
Colden Comm	18	9	6	3	56	34	33
Hamble Club	18	9	2	7	56	39	29
Redlynch O-40	18	8	3	7	59	48	27
Hythe & D	18	6	4	8	51	57	22
Michelmersh	18	3	2	13	31	71	11
Langley Manor	18	1	4	13	25	69	7
Humble Plumb	18	1	1	16	23	97	4

Drew Smith Southampton League winners



Sporting Wessex.



Chamberlayne.



BTC Southampton



Romsey Town Vets

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B Chapman	Hythe, Hants	D Lloyd	Southampton, Hants
J Dibben	Romsey, Hants	A McDonald	Fair Oak, Hants
D Elliott	Southampton, Hants	S Pink	Southampton, Hants
J Franklin	North Baddesley, Hants	C Rigler	Bournemouth, Dorset
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Morgan: We have got to improve away form

Morgan Schneiderlin admits Everton's away form has to improve next season if they are to break into the Premier League's top six.

The former Saints midfielder expects manager Ronald Koeman's summer recruitment to help close the gap, which is currently five points to a Manchester United side whose concentration on the Europa League final means they have coasted towards the end of the campaign.

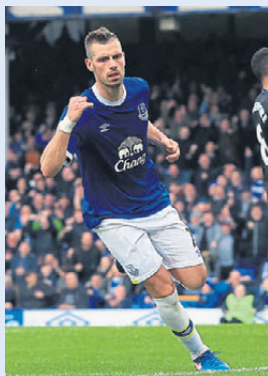
However, the Toffees' away record needs to change drastically if they are to mount a genuine challenge next term.

Everton posted their best return at home since 1989-90 by amassing 43 points, with 13 wins and 42 goals scored at Goodison Park.

There is a stark difference on the road, though, with eight defeats meaning they have taken just 18 points from as many matches, scoring just 19 goals, with a trip to Arsenal to come on Sunday representing their final match.

One of those eight losses was in Koeman's first return to St Mary's last November.

"We look stronger at home but we need to progress away from home and hopefully next year we will do that to catch the team above us because



Morgan Schneiderlin

there is not a lot of margin between us and the top six," Schneiderlin said.

"You can see the difference between home form and away form. That is the main thing.

"If we won more games away from home we could have been top five so we need to be able to rectify that and know why we have not had the results we want away from home.

"But the team is doing well and hopefully we can keep good players and bring in some good players to the club."

Schneiderlin only joined Everton in January, in a £20million deal after falling out of favour at Old Trafford under Jose Mourinho, but he has made an immediate impact on the field.

He has been impressed with the direction the club is heading under Koeman, in his first season at Goodison.

"When a new manager comes in there is always a period of adaptation but the team has done well since the start of the season," he added.

"You could say that in the last two transfer windows they have brought in some quality players and the team is getting stronger.

"There was a little dip of form but we turned it around and I am enjoying every bit of it."

Everton had finished the previous two seasons 11th, but under Koeman have improved four places.

SAINTS

Where could the

Mark Staniforth

The Premier League comes to a conclusion on Sunday with title and relegation issues already resolved.

However, the race for a top-four spot is going right to the finish line on what could be a dramatic afternoon.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at the main talking points as the 2016-17 Premier League season is consigned to history.

WHO WILL MAKE THE TOP FOUR?

Manchester City, Liverpool and Arsenal are involved in a three-way fight for two Champions League places. Third-placed City need only a point at Watford to book their place, and even if they lost they would only be denied by Liverpool beating Middlesbrough and an Arsenal victory over Everton producing a five-goal swing.

Liverpool also have their destiny in their own hands as three points will secure Champions League football for only the second time in eight years.

Draw or lose, though, and Arsenal would be ready to pounce.

The Gunners are the outsiders to be dining at European football's top table next season, but four consecutive wins suggests Arsene Wenger's side have not given up the chase just yet.

The Gunners have not failed to finish in the top four since the 1995/96 season, when they were fifth.

CAN CHELSEA CELEBRATE IN STYLE?

On the face of it, Chelsea's motivation levels might have dipped after a fifth title in 12 years was confirmed by a 1-0 win at West Brom last weekend.

It was a very un-Chelsea-like performance on Monday as Antonio Conte's champions were guilty of some haphazard defending in beating Watford 4-3. But Chelsea have every reason to finish the season in style at home to relegated Sunderland at Stamford Bridge. Another win would be their 30th of the campaign, a Premier League best in a 38-game campaign. Chelsea currently hold the record of 29 set in the 2004-05 and 2005-06 seasons under Jose Mourinho.

The record would provide another feather in Conte's cap, and raise yet more cheer before the Premier League trophy presenta-

Chelsea celebrate winning the Premier League title at West Brom. Can they finish on a high this weekend?



Will Jermain Defoe still be in the Premier League next season?



tion at the end of the game.

WHO WILL WIN THE GOLDEN BOOT?

Harry Kane's four-goal salvo as Tottenham thrashed Leicester 6-1 on Thursday night put the England striker in pole position to win the Golden Boot for the sec-

ond successive season.

Not bad for a player who has missed three months of the season through injury.

Kane goes into Spurs' final game at Hull with 26 league goals to his name, two ahead of Everton striker Romelu Lukaku and three more than Arsenal's Alexis Sanchez.

The 23-year-old scored 25 last

season and has become only the fifth player in the Premier League era to reach that mark in successive seasons.

Kane would be the first player since Robin van Persie in 2013 to win the Golden Boot in successive seasons.

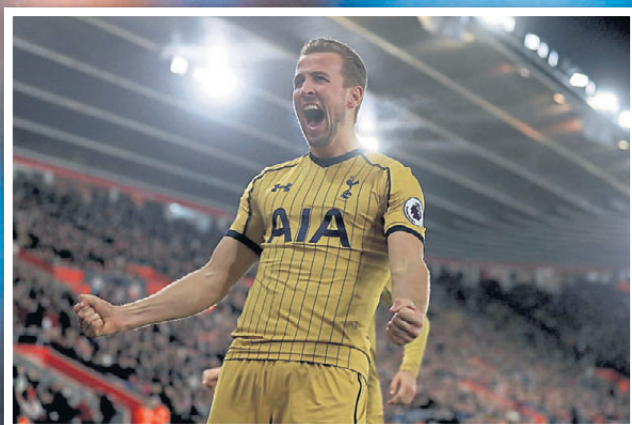
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SAINTS



final drama be?



Will Harry Kane win the Premier League's Golden Boot for the second season running?

Can Arsene Wenger maintain his record of a top four finish in every season as Arsenal manager?

THE MANCHESTER UNITED TEAM?

TV pundit Alan Hansen famously once said that Manchester United would not win "anything with kids" and Jose Mourinho seems set to put that theory to the test against Crystal Palace.

The United manager has Wednesday's Europa League final against Ajax on his mind, with a place in next season's Champions League at stake in Stockholm. Having complained that the Palace fixture should have been brought forward to allow United extra preparation time for the final, Mourinho is set to hand youth its chance at Old Trafford.

Joel Pereira, Demetri Mitchell, Scott McTominay, Axel Tuanzebe, Matty Willock, Josh Harrop and Zachary Dearnley are all in line to make the matchday party, and for many of them it could prove to be the biggest afternoon of their careers.

WHO WILL BE SAYING

GOODBYE?

The final day of the season is always a time for fond farewells and the odd tear or two - and Sunday will be no exception.

John Terry will end his 22-year stay at Stamford Bridge by playing his 717th Chelsea game, lifting the Premier League trophy and making a farewell speech to the fans.

We wait to see if Arsene Wenger and Wayne Rooney are saying goodbye to the league, even if they still have cup finals to come.

Saints fans will be waiting to see whether their club's board decide to keep faith with Claude Puel, despite a possible eighth placed finish and a run to the League Cup final.

Watford's Walter Mazzari is on his way and Hull, Middlesbrough and Sunderland are definitely bidding bon voyage for now, although Harry Maguire, Jordan Pickford and Jermain Defoe will probably end up staying somewhere.

And will Daniel Sturridge, Romelu Lukaku, Ross Barkley, Riyad Mahrez, Gylfi Sigurdsson and Michael Keane be bowing out for their current clubs?

A busy summer awaits.

● Huddersfield fans will get to watch the likes of Harry Kane and Paul Pogba for just £199 for the entire season if the club wins promotion to the Premier League.

The remarkable offer - which has now been closed - was made last month and 17,522 fans have signed up.

If the Terriers beat Reading at Wembley on May 29 it will work out at just £10.47 per match for next season.

It will be even cheaper for 4,400 supporters, who will pay just £100 - £5.26 per match - after taking up chairman Dean Hoyle on his 'personal Premier League pledge' back in March 2010.

The club stands one game away from their first-ever promotion to the Premier League and fans will enjoy some unprecedented season-ticket discounts.

Hoyle announced in 2010 that every season-ticket holder from either the 2008-09 or 2009-10 seasons, who continued each year from 2010-11, would be able to buy a season-ticket for £100 for the club's first season in the top flight.

In November last year the Premier League revealed the average ticket price for a game during 2016-17 was £31.

Should Huddersfield triumph at Wembley they will return to the top flight of English football for the first time in 45 years. They have since spent 17, 22 and six seasons in the second, third and fourth tiers respectively.

Euro finals

Two of the continent's most illustrious clubs meet in the Europa League final next week when Manchester United face Ajax in Stockholm.

Here, the Sports Pink looks back at United's past European finals.

1968 EUROPEAN CUP FINAL - MAN UTD 4 BENFICA 1

A decade on from the Munich air disaster, Matt Busby's team became the first English club to lift the European Cup with a victory over Benfica after extra-time. Bobby Charlton was among the scorers.

1991 EUROPEAN CUP WINNERS' CUP FINAL - MANTD 2 BARCELONA 1

In the first season in which English clubs were allowed to play in European competitions again following the Heysel disaster, Mark Hughes' brace earned Alex Ferguson just his second trophy at the helm.

1999 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL - MAN UTD 2 BAYERN M 1

Ferguson's men clinched the treble in the most dramatic circumstances having trailed in stoppage time before goals from Teddy Sheringham and Ole



Bobby Charlton

Gunnar Solskjaer stunned Bayern.

2008 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL - MAN UTD 1 CHELSEA 1

(UNITED WIN 6-5 ON PENALTIES)

In the first all-English European Cup final, United won on penalties thanks to John Terry's costly slip and Edwin van der Sar's save from Nicolas Anelka in the driving rain.

2009 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL - MAN UTD 0 BARCELONA 2

United's quest to become the first team ever to win back-to-back Champions League titles failed at the final hurdle with Lionel Messi outshining Cristiano Ronaldo in Rome.

2011 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL - MAN UTD 1 BARCELONA 3

A repeat of the 2009 final produced the same outcome as Pep Guardiola's great team won again at Wembley in what would be the last final of Ferguson's reign.

PINK

An all-time Ajax XI

Europa League finalist Ajax boast a rich history of producing their own players.

Here is their all-time homegrown XI.

Goalkeeper: Maarten Stekelenburg

Edwin van der Sar joined Ajax at the age of 19, so ex-Saint Stekelenburg gets the nod with nearly 60 Holland caps and two Eredivisie titles.

Right-back: Wim Suurbier

Made his senior debut at the age of 19 and played nearly 400 games, his attacking adventure played a key role in Ajax's 'Total Football' philosophy of the 1970s.

Centre-back: Toby Alderweireld

The Belgian defender joined Ajax's academy at the age of 15 from Germinal Beerschot. Established himself as one of the world's best centre-backs at Saints and Tottenham.

Centre-back: Frank de Boer

A stylish defender who captained Holland at both the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000, won domestic and European trophies at Ajax before joining Barcelona.

Left-back: Ruud Krol

Versatile operator who could play anywhere across the back line, tough-tackling mainstay of the great Ajax side which won three consecutive European Cups in the 1970s.

Midfield: Frank Rijkaard

Brilliant defensive midfielder who



Maarten Stekelenburg

progressed from the academy into the first team at just 17 years of age, and won two European Cups at AC Milan before returning to Ajax and winning a third in 1995.

Midfield: Edgar Davids

Ferocious competitor nicknamed "The Pitbull" by Louis van Gaal for his aggression and hard-tackling style of play. Helped Ajax to Champions League glory in 1995 before moving on to Juventus.

Midfield: Clarence Seedorf

Became club's youngest-ever debutant aged 16 in 1992, and won the Champions League with Real Madrid and Milan as well as Ajax - the first player to do so with three different clubs.

Striker: Sjaak Swart

The man they called "Mr Ajax" made the most appearances for the club (596) and scored an incredible 217 goals from his right-wing berth in helping them to three European Cups and eight Dutch titles.

Striker: Johnny Rep

Fine finisher and scored winner in 1973 European Cup final against Juventus, edges out Patrick Kluivert who repeated the feat versus Milan in 1995 at the age of 18.

Striker: Johan Cruyff

One of the greatest players to ever grace the game. Playmaker, provider and finisher rolled into one and won three European Cups before becoming a hero all over again in Barcelona.

Dyche: We've got to add more quality



Burnley's Michael Keane

Burnley boss Sean Dyche is already focused on strengthening his squad for next season's Premier League campaign despite the inevitable speculation swirling over the future of some of the Clarets' big names.

Defender Michael Keane has been strongly linked with a move back to his former club Manchester United while England goalkeeper Tom Heaton has also reportedly been targeted by a number of other clubs.

For Dyche the rumours come with the territory of a successful season in the top flight which could see his side finish as high as 11th if they beat West Ham on Sunday and other results go their way.

But he is more interested in building on a promising campaign at Turf Moor.

Dyche said: "We've added to the squad but we still need to look at the market again - we want to keep upgrading not just for the quality, but as an in-house challenge to the players."

"It's always a good stimulus when they see players coming in and they have to fight for their own shirt, so we've got to add more."

Dyche insisted interest in the likes of Keane was the "reality" of a club like Burnley but denied there had been any further developments over his potential return to Old Trafford.

Instead Dyche is preparing for the clash

with the Hammers determined to finish with a victory which will round off a solid and unexpectedly comfortable campaign in style.

Dyche added: "It has proved to be a good season. You can't take any shortcuts in the Premier League and we've deserved everything we've got."

"We've only been in the bottom three once and that was after the first weekend of the season."

"Really we've tended to look up all the time so it would be great to finish with a win and see how the table ends up."

Keane could return after missing the recent trip to Bournemouth, a 2-1 loss last weekend, with a knock.

'Let's show world that Ajax are back'

Simon Peach

Manchester United v Ajax - a classic European final between two giants of the continental games.

One heads into the Europa League showdown next Wednesday driven by expectation, the other hope brought by the latest batch of outrageously talented youngsters spewed out by their remarkable youth system.

For Jose Mourinho's United, the Stockholm clash on May 24 is make-or-break having flunked their top-four Premier League tilt.

Their only avenue to the riches of the Champions League is winning the Europa League - the only major trophy to have eluded them in their success-laden history.

United are looking to become just the fourth team to have won all three major UEFA trophies, including the now-defunct European Cup Winners' Cup, as well as the Club World Cup or the Intercontinental Cup, joining Bayern Munich, Juventus and Wednesday's opponents Ajax.

While things have gone awry at Old Trafford since Sir Alex Ferguson's retirement, it hardly compares to the Dutch side's struggles.

Constantly plundered for their best talent, continental success has become all too infrequent and this is Ajax's first major European finals since winning the mid-1990s.

They won the Champions League in 1995 and finished runners-up the following year - matches that Edwin van der Sar was in goal for.

The giant Holland goalkeeper was also in net for United's last continental success when they won the Champions League in 2008, before playing in both the 2009 and 2011



Edwin van der Sar

finals.

Van der Sar hung up his gloves after the latter and returned to Ajax, where he now works as chief executive.

"I think our philosophy is always trying to play football," Van der Sar said ahead of facing his former club.

"That's what we teach them when they come into our academy at seven or eight years old."

"Of course finals are always different than other games, but we've played against good teams this cam-

paign. We are proud of the players and the remarkable rise of them."

"I am sure they are up for this match against United, who in the Premier League have struggled. In the Europa League they have made the final but not always been convincing."

"We know their qualities, their strengths and, of course, for the next couple of days we are going to have an in-depth look at how they are going to play and team up against us."

Ajax have been able to focus on

the final since their Eredivisie campaign ended on Sunday, whereas United had two dead rubbers to contend with in the Premier League, including Wednesday's stalemate at St Mary's.

Mourinho continues to moan about their fixture pile-up and injuries, rotating the side with the Europa League final in mind.

"I am not interested in what Mourinho is doing," Van der Sar said.

"I am chief executive at Ajax and my responsibility is Ajax and what Mourinho does or says he can do that himself."

"We know how he is and he is very experienced as a manager at many big clubs, so he deals with the players and the club as he wishes."

Van der Sar's only goal is making Ajax a European force again, having been "away too long from the international podium".

"Of course (it will be emotional), it is two clubs from your heart," the former United goalkeeper said. "I am very happy with the opportunity that I've got here in Amsterdam."

"We've got a fantastic team around me - the same as being a goalkeeper, you need good defenders, you need a Ferdinand, you need a Neville, you need a Giggs on the wing, you need a Ronaldo, a Rooney up front, and a Carrick in the midfield."

"The same as our organisation at the club, I need a good commercial director, operational director and it's leading a team again and making sure that we go forward and score and get goals that brings us the league or the final."

"We're really looking forward to the 24th of May. It is a fantastic opportunity for us to show the world again that Ajax is back."

SAINTS FIXTURES 2016/17



		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
August															
Sat 13 Watford (h)	D 1-1	Forster	Cedric+	Targett	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Romeu	Davis	= W-Prowse	*Long	Tadic	Redmond 1	+Pied	=Hojbjerg	*Austin
Fri 19 Man Utd (a)	L 1-2	Forster	Cedric	Targett	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu*	Hjojberg	Davis=	Austin	Long+	Redmond	+Rodriguez	=Austin	*Clasie
Sat 27 Sunderland (h)	D1-1	Forster	Cedric	Targett	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	Hjojberg*	Davis	Austin=	Tadic+	Redmond	+Long	=Rodriguez	*W-Prowse
September															
Sat 10 Arsenal (a)	L 1-2	Forster	Cedric	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	Davis	Clasie*	Tadic1=	Rodriguez+	Redmond	+Long	=W-Prowse	*Hjojberg
Thurs 15 Sp Prague (Eur Lge) (h)	W 3-0	Forster	Martina	Targett	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Romeu=	W-Prowse	Hjojberg	Tadic*	Austin 2+	Long	+Rodriguez1	= Davis	*Redmond
Sun 18 Swansea (h)	W 1-0	Forster	Cedric	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	Davis	Clasie*	Tadic=	Long+	Redmond	+Hjojberg	=Martina	*Austin1
Wed 21 C Palace (Lge Cup, H)	W 2-0	McCarthy	Martina	Targett	Yoshida	Fonte	W-Prowse	Reed	Clasie	Hesketh1*	Austin1+	Long=	+Redmond	=Tadic	*Hjojberg
Sun 25 West Ham (a)	W 3-0	Forster	Soares+	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	Davis	Hojbjerg	Tadic1*	Austin1=	Redmond	+Martina	=Long	*W-Prowse1
Thurs 29 Hapoel (Europa Lge) (a)	D 0-0	Forster	Martina	Targett	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Romeu	W-Prowse	Clasie	Hesketh+	Long	Redmond=	+Tadic	= Hjojberg	
October															
Sun 2 Leicester (a)	D 0-0	Forster	Soares+	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	Davis	Hojbjerg	Tadic*	Austin=	Redmond	+ Martina	=W-Prowse	*Long
Sun 16 Burnley (h)	W 3-1	Forster	Martina	Targett+	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	Davis	Clasie	Tadic	Austin2=	Redmond1*	+McQueen	=Rodriguez	*W-Pr
Thurs 20 Inter (Europa Lge, a)	L 0-1	Forster	Martina	McQueen	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Romeu	W-Pr	Hojbjerg	Tadic*	Long+	Rodriguez=	+Austin	=Davis	*Boufal
Sun 23 Man City (a)	D 1-1	Forster	Martina	McQueen	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	Davis	Clasie+	Tadic*	Austin=	Redmond1	+Hojbjerg	=W-Prowse	* Boufal
Wed 26 Sunderland (Lge Cup, h)	W 1-0	McCarthy	Stephens	McQueen	Yoshida	Fonte	Reed +	W-Prowse	Boufal1	Isgrove=	Hojbjerg	Rodriguez*	+Clasie	=Redmond	
Sun 30 Chelsea (h)	L 0-2	Forster	Martina	Bertrand+	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	Davis	Clasie*	Tadic=	Austin	Redmond	+McQueen	=Hojbjerg	*Boufal
November															
Thurs 3 Inter (Europa Lge) (h)	W 2-1	Forster	Martina	McQueen	Van Dijk1	Yoshida	Romeu	W-Prowse	Hojbjerg	Tadic+	Rodriguez=	Redmond	+Davis	=Austin	
Sat 6 Hull (a)	L 1-2	Forster	Yoshida	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	Davis	Clasie=	Tadic+	Austin1	Redmond*	+Boufal	=Rodriguez	*JWP
Sat 19 Liverpool (h)	D 0-0	Forster	Cedric	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	Davis	Hojbjerg+	Boufal=	Austin*	Redmond	+ Reed	=Long	*Rodriguez
Thur 24 Sp Prague (Eur Lge, a)	L 0-1	Forster	Martina	McQueen	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Clasie+	W-Prowse	Hojbjerg=	Long	Rodriguez*	Redmond	+Austin	=Boufal	*Romeu
Sun 27 Everton (h)	W 1-0	Forster	Cedric	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	W-Prowse	Hojbjerg	Sims+	Austin1=	Redmond*	+McQueen	=Long	*Clasie
Wed 30 Arsenal (League Cup, a)	W 2-0	Forster	Martina	Bertrand1	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Clasie1	Davis	Reed+	Boufal=	Long	McQueen	+Hojbjerg	=Sims	
December															
Sat 3 Crystal Palace (a)	L 0-3	Forster	Cedric	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	W-Prowse	Hojbjerg+	Boufal =	Austin*	Redmond	+Sims	=Long	*McQueen
Thurs 8 Hapoel (Europa Lge, h)	D1-1	Forster	Cedric	Bernard	Van Dijk1	Yoshida	Romeu	Davis	Hojbjerg+	Sims*	Austin=	Redmond	+ W-Prowse	=Long	*Tadic
Sun 11 Middlesbrough (h)	W 1-0	Forster	Martina	McQueen	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	W-Prowse	Clasie+	Boufal1=	Rodriguez	Tadic*	+Long	=Davis	*Redmond
Wed 14 Stoke (a)	D 0-0	Forster	Martina*	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Fonte	Romeu	W-Prowse	Davis	Boufal	Long+	Redmond=	+Rodriguez	=Tadic	*McQueen
Sun 18 Bournemouth (a)	W 3-1	Forster	Soares	Bertrand1	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Reed+	Hojbjerg	Clasie	Boufal*	Rodriguez2=	Redmond	+Davis	= Long	* Tadic
Wed 28 Tottenham (h)	L 1-4	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Van Dijk1	Fonte	Romeu	W-Prowse	Davis+	Boufal=	Rodriguez*	Redmond	+Long	= Hojbjerg	*Tadic
Sat 31 West Brom (h)	L 1-2	Forster	Martina+	McQueen	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Romeu	Hojbjerg=	Davis	Boufal	Long1	Tadic*	+W-Prowse	=Rodriguez	*Sims
January															
Mon 2 Everton (a)	L 0-3	Forster	Soares+	McQueen	Yoshida	Fonte	Romeu	J W-Prowse	Clasie=	Tadic*	Rodriguez	Redmond	+Stephens	=Long	*Boufal
Sat 7 Norwich (FAC, a)	D 2-2	Lewis	Stephens	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Reed+	J W-Prowse	Hojbjerg	Tadic	Long=	Sims*	+Romeu	=Rodriguez	*Redmond
Wed 11 Liverpool (LC, h)	W 1-0	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Romeu	Clasie=	Davis+	Tadic	Rodriguez*	Redmond1	+W-Prowse	=Hojbjerg	*Long
Sat 14 Burnley (a)	L 0-1	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Yoshida	Romeu	J W-Prowse	Hojbjerg	Tadic+	Long	Redmond=	+Rodriguez	=Sims	
Wed 18 Norwich (FAC, h)	W 1-0	Lewis	Martina	McQueen	Stephens	Yoshida	Reed+	J W-Prowse	Clasie	Sims	Long1	Rodriguez=	+Romeu	=Redmond	
Sat 21 Leicester (h)	W 3-0	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Van Dijk	Yoshida+	Romeu	J W-Prowse1	Hojbjerg=	Tadic1	Rodriguez1*	Redmond	+Stephens	=Clasie	*Long
Wed 25 Liverpool (LC, a)	W 1-0	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	J W-Prowse=	Davis	Tadic	Rodriguez+	Redmond*	+Long	=Hojbjerg	*Sims
Sat 28 Arsenal (FAC) (h)	L 0-5	Lewis	Martina	McQueen	Stephens	Gardos	Reed	Clasie	Hojbjerg	Sims	Long =	Isgrove+	+Tadic	=Redmond	
Tues 31 Swansea (a)	L 1-2	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	Clasie	Davis	Tadic+	Long1	Redmond=	+Boufal	=McQueen	
February															
Sat 4 West Ham (h)	L 1-3	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	J W-Prowse	Davis	Gabbiadini1	Boufal+	Rodriguez=	+Long	=Redmond	
Sat 11 Sunderland (a)	W 4-0	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	J W-Prowse	Davis	Gabbiadini2=	Tadic+	Redmond	+Hojbjerg	=Long1	
Sun 26 Man Utd (LC final)	L 2-3	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	J W-Prowse	Davis+	Gabbiadini2=	Tadic*	Redmond	+Rodriguez	=Long	*Boufal
March															
Sat 4 Watford (a)	W 4-3	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	J W-Prowse*	Davis	Gabbiadini1+	Tadic=	Redmond	+Long	=Clasie	* Boufal
Sun 19 Tottenham (a)	L 1-2	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	J W-Prowse1	Davis	Gabbiadini+	Tadic=	Redmond*	+Long	=Boufal	*Rodriguez
April															
Sat 1 Bournemouth (h)	D 0-0	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	J W-Prowse+	Davis	Rodriguez=	Tadic*	Redmond	+Boufal	=Long	*McQueen
Wed 5 Crystal Palace (h)	W 3-1	Forster	Soares	McQueen	Stephens	Yoshida1	Romeu	J W-Prowse1	Davis+	Long	Tadic	Redmond1*	+Hojbjerg	=Rodriguez	
Sat 8 West Brom (a)	W 1-0	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Clasie1+	J W-Prowse=	Hojbjerg	Long	Tadic	Redmond*	+Reed	=Sims	*McQueen
Sat 15 Man City (h)	L 0-3	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Hojbjerg	J W-Prowse+	Davis	Gabbiadini=	Tadic	Redmond*	+Boufal	=Long	*Rodriguez
Tues 25 Chelsea (a)	L 2-4	Forster	Soares	Bertrand1	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu1	J W-Prowse+	Davis	Gabbiadini=	Tadic	Boufal*	+Long	=Rodriguez	*Redmond
Sat 29 Hull (h)	D 0-0	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	Boufal+	Davis	Gabbiadini=	Tadic	Redmond*	+Sims	=Long	*Rodriguez
May															
Sun 7 Liverpool (a)	D 0-0	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	Boufal+	Davis	Gabbiadini=	Tadic	W-Prowse	+Redmond	= Long	
Wed 10 Arsenal (h)	L 0-2	Forster	Soares	Bertrand	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	W-Prowse*	Davis	Gabbiadini	Tadic+	Redmond=	+Rodriguez	= Long	* Boufal
Sat 13 Middlesbrough (a)	W 2-1	Forster	Pied	Bertrand	Caceres	Yoshida	Romeu	Hojbjerg+	Clasie	Rodriguez1	Boufal=	Long*	+Davis	=Redmond1	* Austin
Wed 17 Man Utd (h)	D 0-0	Forster	Soares+	Targett	Stephens	Yoshida	Romeu	W-Prowse=	Davis	Gabbiadini*	Tadic	Redmond	+Pied	= Boufal	* Rodriguez
Sun 21 Stoke (h)	(h)														

SAINTS



● John Terry celebrated his recall to the Chelsea starting line-up with the opening goal against Watford on Monday.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at the statistical significance of the strike.

● The goal was Terry's 41st in the Premier League - lifting him three clear as the competition's top-scoring defender and 11 in front of his nearest active rival, Everton full-back Leighton Baines.

● It was his 67th in all competitions for Chelsea, taking him ahead of John McNichol and Dick Spence into 20th place outright in the club's all-time list.

● He has now scored in 17 consecutive Premier League seasons, by far the longest such streak for a defender - team-mate Gary Cahill's ongoing run of 10 seasons currently matches former Liverpool star Sami Hyypia for second place.

● Terry's goal was his first in any competition for 485 days, since his strike against Everton on January 16 of last year.

● He was joined by fellow defender Cesar Azpilicueta in scoring his first league goal of the season, Chelsea's 13th and 14th scorers in their title-winning campaign.

● Terry's opener was Chelsea's 100th goal of the season in all competitions - their 77th in the league to go with 15 in the FA Cup and eight in the EFL Cup.

Ronaldo reaches the 400-goal milestone



Cristiano Ronaldo

Cristiano Ronaldo reached 400 goals for Real Madrid in just 391 games when he put his side 2-0 up in the 23rd minute of Sunday's LaLiga game against Sevilla at the Bernabeu.

Here is a breakdown Ronaldo's quadruple century.

BY COMPETITION

LaLiga: 281
Champions League: 88
Copa Del Rey: 22
Spanish Super Cup: 3
UEFA Super Cup: 2
Club World Cup: 4

Ronaldo has a record better

than a goal a game for Real in both LaLiga (263 appearances) and the Champions League (87).

BY SEASON

2009-10: 33
2010-11: 53*
2011-12: 60
2012-13: 55
2013-14: 51
2014-15: 61
2015-16: 51
2016-17: 36

* Real prematurely celebrated Ronaldo reaching 400 after his hat-trick in the first leg against Atletico.

The anomaly stems from the 2010-11 season, in which Ronaldo was LaLiga's top scorer with 40 goals. Spanish newspaper Marca, custodians of the Pichichi award for the top scorer, awarded him a 41st when his free-kick against Real Sociedad deflected in off team-mate Pepe, who was officially credited with the goal by the Spanish League (LFP).

FAVOURITE OPPONENTS

v Sevilla: 24 goals
v Getafe: 22
v Athletic Bilbao: 19
v Atletico Madrid: 18
v Malaga: 17

Champs seeking new win record



Chelsea celebrate a goal in their 4-2 win against Saints last month.

Monday's win over Watford saw Chelsea match their own Premier League record of 29 wins in a season.

With one game remaining, at home to Sunderland on Sunday, Antonio Conte's side have a golden opportunity to set a new mark.

Here, the Sports Pink compares this season to the previous campaigns in which Jose Mourinho's sides established the record - which even encompasses the Premier League's early 42-game seasons - and reviews this memorable season.

2004-05

W 29 D 8 L 1, 95 pts
Goal difference +57

Mourinho's remarkable first season in England saw Chelsea sweep all before them, winning the Premier League with a record points total and conceding only 15 goals. Their only loss came as Nicolas Anelka's penalty earned Manchester City a 1-0 success but they were top from their 12th match onwards.

2005-06

W 29 D 4 L 5, 91 pts
Goal difference +50

A 4-0 win over West Brom in their third game saw Chelsea to the summit and, again, they were not to be budged. They finished eight points clear of Manchester United, with Liverpool a further point back.

2016-17

W 29 D 3 L 5, 90 pts
Goal difference +48

While they cannot match their staggering 2004-05 points tally, victory at home to Sunderland would set a new win record. Even a draw against one of the worst teams in recent Premier League history would match their record from 2005-06.

Two of Chelsea's wins this season were against Saints - 2-0 at St Mary's and 4-2 at Stamford Bridge.

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SAINTS



John Terry - his Blues career in numbers



Chelsea's John Terry.

John Terry will leave Chelsea at the end of the season and could retire altogether.

Here, the Sports Pink takes a look at the 36-year-old Blues captain's career in numbers:

19

Number of years since he made his Chelsea first-team debut

716

Number of Chelsea appearances

6

Number of appearances on loan at Nottingham Forest in 2000

78

Number of England caps

41

Number of Premier League goals he has scored for Chelsea

17

Terry has scored in 17 successive Premier League seasons

579

Games as captain of the Blues, a club record

26

Number on the back of his Chelsea shirt

15

Number of major titles he has won as Chelsea captain (five Premier Leagues, five FA Cups, three League Cups, one Champions League and one Europa League).

● Boss Craig Shakespeare wants a response from his Leicester players in the final game of the season against Bournemouth.

● Shakespeare and his side have been praised for the way they have revived Leicester's campaign following the departure of Claudio Ranieri in February but for the first time since questions are being asked of their character following Thursday's 6-1 thrashing by Tottenham.

● Shakespeare revealed he had some "harsh words" with his team after the game but insists that all involved are keen to right the wrongs against Bournemouth at the King Power Stadium on Sunday.

● "The scoreline was obviously massively disappointing, especially considering the form we'd been in and the run we'd been on. On Sunday we have a chance to put that right and we are keen to put it right," said Shakespeare.

Terry almost joined Terriers

Mark Staniforth

Did you know John George Terry supported Manchester United growing up, enjoys playing golf with Niall from One Direction and was Dad of the Year in 2009?

Here, the Sports Pink looks at three things you may not have heard about the Chelsea skipper, who is considering retiring when he leaves the club at the end of the season.

1. Direction

In June 2014, keen golfer Terry teamed up with Jamie Redknapp to take on Niall Horan from boyband One Direction and former Chelsea team-mate Andriy Shevchenko at Wisley golf course in Surrey. Terry also struck up a friendship with Australian snooker player Neil Robertson when the former world number one visited Cobham training ground for a game of pool. Robertson claimed Terry was "a lot better" than he expected.

2. Terry the Terrier

Barring a brief loan spell at Nottingham Forest, Terry has spent the whole of his career at Stamford Bridge. But did you know Steve Bruce was on the verge of taking the defender to Huddersfield in 2000? It was while a 19-year-old Terry was at the City Ground and Bruce was in the process of doing his FA coaching badges. Bruce said six years ago: "I bid £750,000 for him, it was a lot of money for me then, and Chelsea accepted it. But the boy didn't want to leave Stamford Bridge at the time. I was close,



Chelsea's John Terry (right) and Saints' Shane Long last month.

but at the death he didn't want to go."

3. Dad of the Year

Terry has posted many a picture of himself with his kids on his Instagram account, and why shouldn't

he? He was, after all, named Dad of the Year in 2009. The former England skipper topped a poll run by Daddies Sauce to win the sought-after accolade, beating off stiff competition in the form of Peter Andre and then-PM Gordon Brown.



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Hants fixtures 2017

APRIL

2-4 Cardiff MCCU (h) FR
 Hants 289 (M Carberry 100, S Ervine 58, L Dawson 45) & 271-6 dec (J Vince 90, T Alsop 52), Cardiff 98 (A Hart 3-17, F Edwards 3-22, B Wheal 3-32) & 110-2. Drawn
 7-10 Yorkshire (a) CC1
 Yorkshire 273 (F Edwards 3-58) & 187 (K Abbott 7-41), Hants 141 & 321-6 (J Adams 72, R Rossouw 47, J Vince 44, M Carberry 41). Hants won by 4 wickets
 14-17 Middlesex (h) CC1
 Middlesex 456 (B Wheal 4-98) & 278-9 (K Abbott 5-59, B Wheal 3-73), Hants 438 (R Rossouw 99, M Carberry 98, K Abbott 56, S Ervine 53). Drawn.
 21-24 Yorkshire (h) CC1
 Hampshire 455 (J Vince 147, G Berg 99no), Yorkshire 231 (Berg 4-62) & 399-6 (K Abbott 3-65). Drawn
 27 Kent (a) 50L
 Kent 258 (R Topley 3-65), Hants 260-4 (T Alsop 112no, J Vince 69). Hants won by 6 wickets.
 30 Essex (a) 50L
 Essex 304-7, Hants 279 (J Vince 68, G Bailey 63). Hants lost by 25 runs.

MAY

3 Middlesex (h) 50L
 Middlesex 295 (Gubbins 114, Topley 4-68) beat Hants 146-7 (Bailey 52no) by 89 runs (D/L)
 7 Gloucestershire (h) 50L
 Hampshire 239-3 (Vince 89*) beat Gloucs 237 (Dawson 3-30) by 7 wickets
 10 Somerset (a) 50L
 Hampshire 250-6 (Rossouw 156) beat Somerset 249 (Berg 3-44) by 4 wickets
 12 Glamorgan (h) 50L
 Hampshire 332-6 (Vince 178) lost to Glamorgan 334-7 (Crane 3-69) by 3 wickets
 14 Surrey (a) 50L
 Hampshire 271-8 (Bailey 145no) lost to Surrey 238-2 by 66 runs (D/L)
 17 Sussex (h) 50L
 Match abandoned
 19-22 Essex (a) CC1
 26-29 Somerset (a) CC1
 27 England v South Africa, ODI, Ageas Bowl.

JUNE

2-5 Warwickshire (h) CC1
 8-11 South Africa (a) (h) Fr
 13 50L QF
 16-17 50L SF
 19-22 Lancashire (a, tbc) CC1
 26-29 Somerset (h) CC1

JULY

3-6 Surrey (a) CC1
 7 Glamorgan (a) T20
 12 Sussex (a) T20
 14 Middlesex (h) T20
 20 Sussex (h) T20
 21 Essex (a) T20
 23 Surrey (h) T20
 26 Somerset (a) T20
 28 Gloucestershire (a) T20

AUGUST

1 Kent (h) T20
 3 Middlesex (Lord's) T20
 4 Essex (h) T20
 6-9 Lancashire (h) CC1
 10 Glamorgan (h) T20
 11 Kent (a) T20
 18 Somerset (h) T20
 22-25 T20 QF

SEPTEMBER

2 T20 Finals Day
 5-8 Surrey (h) CC1
 12-15 Middlesex (a, tbc) CC1
 19-22 Essex (h) CC1
 25-28 Warwickshire (a) CC1

Key

CC1 - Specsavers County Championship division one
 50L - Royal London One-Day Cup
 T20 - Natwest T20 Blast

HANTS CRICKET



Hants' highest

Simon Walter



IT seems longer than ten days ago that Rilee Rossouw struck his match-winning 156 against Somerset.

Bizarrely, Hampshire's unsuccessful Royal London One-Day Cup campaign featured three of the county's highest individual scores of all time - within the space of eight days.

The most recent two came last weekend, but Hampshire still managed to lose to Glamorgan and Surrey. Bailey's unbeaten 145 against Surrey at The Oval came two days after Vince's 178 against Glamorgan at The Ageas Bowl.

On only one other occasion has a Hampshire batsman scored more than 135 in a List A game and still finished on the losing side (Robin Smith in 1989).

Hampshire's two defeats all but ended their interest in this year's 50-over competition.

Their exit at the group stage was confirmed before their final game against Sussex at The Ageas Bowl on Wednesday, was washed out without a ball bowled.

Reflecting on Hampshire's disappointing campaign, director of cricket Giles White said: "We probably didn't deserve to go through, we haven't played our best cricket."

"On paper we are a good side but there have been a lot of good sides.

"At times we were not at our best in games we should have won and the competition is so short it only takes a few results not to go your way. There are fine lines."

Here are Hampshire's highest individual List A scores. They are shared by 14 batsmen and Gordon Greenidge has five of them. The Smith brothers and Michael Carberry have two apiece.

JAMES VINCE 178
(May 12, 2017)

Hampshire's captain broke Gordon Greenidge's 42-year-old record yet still finished on the losing side as Glamorgan chased down their 332-6 to win by three wickets with seven balls to spare at The Ageas Bowl last Friday.

Vince also shared a stand of 221 with Liam Dawson - a record for Hampshire's fourth wicket in List A matches.

A Glamorgan win was almost inconceivable after his magnificent 138-baller, which included 18 fours and five sixes.

But Reece Topley had a disastrous final spell as Colin Ingram (115) and Chris Cooke (59* from 27 balls) blasted Glamorgan to a



James Vince hits out during his record breaking 178 against Glamorgan at The Ageas Bowl. Inset: Rilee Rossouw.

stunning win.

GORDON GREENIDGE
177 (July 1975)

The great West Indian had Hampshire's three highest List A scores to himself before James Vince's heroics against Glamorgan.

The previous record was also

set against Glamorgan, a Gillette Cup second round tie at Northlands Road, which also featured a 210-run opening stand between Greenidge and Barry Richards (129).

Those with long memories will recall that the Gillette Cup was a 60-over competition ion those days, making Vince's record even more impressive.

Hampshire went on to win by 164 runs, with Andy Roberts and Peter Sainsbury claiming three wickets apiece.

GORDON GREENIDGE
173* (April 1973)

Amersham CC's small ground was also the setting for what is still Hampshire's highest part-

HANTS CRICKET



ODI innings ever



nership in limited-overs cricket.

David Turner contributed 123 to an unbroken third-wicket stand of 285 with Greenidge as Hampshire amassed 321-1 against Minor Counties South in the Benson & Hedges Cup's west group.

Hampshire won by 128 runs at the beginning of the season that would see them win the County Championship for the second

time.

Tom Mottram, one of the heroes of Hampshire's last Championship title triumph, took 3-28 as the Minor Counties were bowled out for 193 in reply.

GORDON GREENIDGE
172 (May 1987)

Thirty years have passed since

a 36 year-old Greenidge hit the highest-ever 40-over score for Hampshire, in a 75-run Refuge Assurance League win against Surrey at Northlands Rd.

Hampshire were 54-3 but Greenidge shared a fourth-wicket stand of 219 with Chris Smith, whose unbeaten 60 helped the home side to 281-5.

Tim Tremlett (3-56) and Nigel

Cowley (3-36) ensured Surrey were all out for 206 in reply.

SEAN ERVINE 167*
(May 2009)

This was the highest limited-overs score made at The Ageas Bowl before James Vince got to work against Glamorgan.

Batting at three, 'Slug' hit 20 fours and four sixes as Hampshire amassed 316-2. They were 56-2 but Michael Carberry (121*) helped his fellow left-hander put on an unbroken 260, which is the third-highest limited-overs partnership for any Hampshire wicket.

Dominic Cork was at the beginning of his first season with the county and finished with 4-20 to secure a 77-run in the group stage of the Friends Provident Trophy - a competition Hampshire would win by beating Sussex at Lord's two months later.

TREVOR JESTY 166*
(July 1983)

The Gosport-based all-rounder was enjoying his finest List A season for Hampshire when he produced this gem of an innings on his home ground, United Services' Burnaby Road, Portsmouth.

Jesty shared an unbroken 169 with Gordon Greenidge (108*) as Hampshire made 292-1 from their 40 overs in this 104-run win against Surrey in the John Player League.

Nigel Cowley took 4-42 as Hampshire limited Surrey to 188-5 in reply.

PAUL TERRY 165*
(July 1985)

After an opening stand of 152 with Gordon Greenidge (89), PT continued to put Berkshire to the sword in the first round of the 60-over Natwest Trophy at Northlands Road.

Hampshire amassed 339-4 and won by 187 runs when Berkshire were bowled out for 152 in reply.

GORDON GREENIDGE
163* (July 1979)

Hampshire needed every one of these runs as they won a thriller by just one run against Warwickshire at Edgbaston in the John Player League.

Greenidge shared an opening partnership of 122 with John Rice (43) and was still there at the end of the 40 overs with Hampshire 250-5.

Warwickshire closed on 249-8.

GORDON GREENIDGE
162* (July 1983)

This was another Greenidge Special in the John Player Special League. *Continued on next page*

New World Cup chance for Cook?

Alastair Cook may yet find an improbable route back into England's 2019 World Cup reckoning after earning an invitation to next year's North-South Series.

Cook was axed as England's one-day international captain just before the last World Cup, in Australia and New Zealand in 2015, and has not featured in any squad since leading his country to a 5-2 series defeat in Sri Lanka shortly before his 30th birthday in December 2014.

England have moved on without him, under the leadership of Eoin Morgan and a new coaching regime too, to the point that they will begin next month's home Champions Trophy campaign as one of the favourites.

Cook has put himself nominally back in the frame again, however, by hitting more than 500 runs - including two centuries - in Essex's table-topping group campaign in this season's Royal London Cup to claim third place in the Professional Cricketers' Association MVP rankings.

That status guarantees a mandatory invitation for any England-qualified player to the second edition of the North-South Series - an innovation from England and Wales Cricket Board director



Alastair Cook

Andrew Strauss, in order to track players who may force their way into the 2019 squad.

It appears unlikely, nonetheless, that England might recall all-time national record Test run-scorer Cook, having dispensed with the opener's white-ball services more than two years ago after his 92 caps to date.

There is an extra snag too, in that the North-South Series - held in the United Arab Emirates in March this year, but with no dates or venues yet announced for 2018 - may well clash with England's Test series in New Zealand next spring.

Cook is almost certain to be involved in that tour, fitness permitting.

The former England captain has been in outstanding form in both formats so far this summer and was back in Specsavers County Championship action for Essex against Hampshire at Chelmsford this weekend, having scored another ton - 124 - in his side's first innings.

Hampshire captain James Vince led the South to a 3-0 win two months ago and has also qualified again for one of the four places available in the same squad next year - alongside Kent opener Daniel Bell-Drummond and Cook's Essex and former international team-mate Ravi Bopara.

Afridi on the way back to Hampshire

Former Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi will return to Hampshire for a third spell after signing for this season's NatWest T20 Blast.

The 37-year-old, a big-hitting batsman and dangerous leg-spinner who had spells at the Ageas Bowl in 2011 and 2016, played 27 Tests, 398 one-day internationals and 98 Twenty20s during a glittering career for Pakistan.

Here, the Sports Pink takes a look at five of his best international performances.

October 1996

102 against Sri Lanka (ODI) in Nairobi

Aged 16 years and 217 days, Afridi shot to stardom by crashing the fastest one-day international century - from just 37 balls - in his first format innings. The right-hander justified the decision to elevate him to number three by smashing six fours and 11 sixes in his 102, helping Pakistan beat Sri Lanka by 82 runs. The record was in place for



more than 17 years until New Zealander Corey Anderson required just 36 deliveries to reach the milestone on New Year's Day in 2014.

January 1999

141 against India (Test) in Chennai

Despite transforming into a limited-overs specialist for Pakistan, 18-year-old Afridi proved his Test credentials by following a five-wicket haul on his debut with a century in his second match. Opening the innings, Afridi displayed the type of concentration and patience that he often lacked in one-day cricket, batting for more than five hours for 141 from 191 deliveries to inspire Pakistan to a 12-run victory over rivals India.

April 2005

102 against India (ODI) in Kanpur

Afridi continued his century-making against India by producing another sensational knock, this time taking 45 balls to reach an ODI hundred.

Continued on facing page

HANTS CRICKET

Hants' greatest



From page 39

It helped Hampshire post 268-4 from their 40 overs in a 58-run win at Old Trafford. Trevor Jesty's 5-43 meant Lancashire were restricted to 210 in reply.

CHRIS SMITH 159
(June 1989)

A 228-run opening partnership with Paul Terry (99) laid the foundation for Hampshire's 306-2 against Cheshire in the first round of the 60-over Natwest Trophy.

Malcolm Marshall took 4-40 as Cheshire were skittled for 159 in reply at Boughton Hall Avenue, Chester.

ROBIN SMITH 158
(July 1996)

The Judge was in blistering form in a Natwest Trophy second-round tie against Worcestershire at New Road. The Hampshire legend put on 179 for the second wicket with Jason Laney as Hampshire piled up 328-6 from their 60 overs after losing the toss.

It helped Hampshire to a 125-run win.

Kevan James (4-42) dismissed Worcestershire's top three, including Graeme Hick for a duck, as the home side was bowled out for 203 in reply.

CHRIS BENHAM 158
(September 2006)

Shane Warne tipped Benham to be a future Hampshire captain after he smashed this ton in a Natwest Pro40 League play off against Glamorgan at The Ageas Bowl.

He dominated an opening partnership of 106 with Michael Brown (29) and hit 21 fours and a six in his 130-ball blitz.

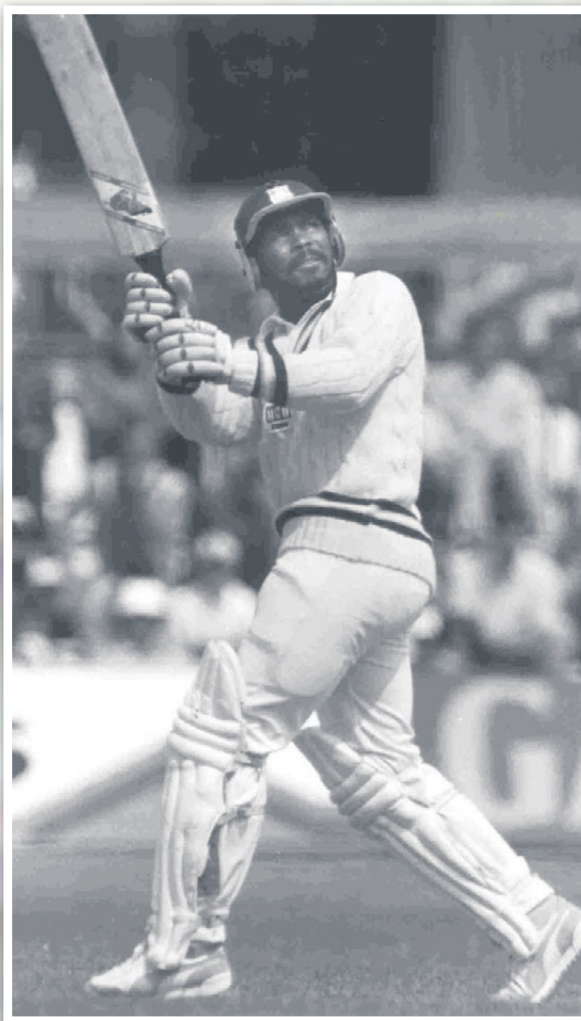
Hampshire made 265-9 from their 40 overs and James Bruce (3-48) and Sean Ervine (4-24) ensured a comfortable win as they bowled out Glamorgan for 114 in reply.

RILEE ROSSOUW 156
(May 10, 2017)

The Kolpak signing showed why Hampshire signed him with his bums-on-seats, bar-emptying brilliance at Taunton. The South African needed only 113 balls, which featured 24 fours and two sixes, for his 156.

After Hampshire chased down Somerset's 249 to win by four wickets, Rossouw revealed that he had been inspired by some sledging from Dean Elgar, his former South Africa teammate.

"I've got to thank Deano. He's not going to like this but I'm going to say it.



George Bailey, main picture, and West Indian master blaster Gordon Greenidge (above).

"He abused my when I was still on nought. It was like a switch that switched on and I started middling everything so thanks Deano for that 156!"

"I'm not going to say what was said but it was something to do with the pound! From then on I just started hitting boundaries.

"I stayed in my bubble and didn't let the chirps or the bowlers get to me."

BARRY RICHARDS 155*
(June 1970)

The great South African was at his brilliant best in this John Player League win against Yorkshire in Hull.

At the time, this was Hampshire's record limited-overs score with Richards scoring 72 per cent of his county's 215-2.

It featured an unbroken third-wicket stand of 105 with David Livingstone, who contributed 18. Butch White then bowled four of Yorkshire's top five, including Geoff Boycott, before the home side made 74-9 from their 40-overs.

ROBIN SMITH 155*
(May 1989)

Hampshire were 6-2, having been asked to bat by Glamorgan, when the Judge came to the crease in this Benson & Hedges Cup group game at Northlands Road.

Richard Scott and Mark Nicholas had both succumbed to the left-arm seam of Simon Dennis, but Smith put on 185 with his good friend Paul Terry (76) and an un-

HANTS CRICKET

ODI innings ever



broken 95 with David Turner (40). It helped Hampshire post 286-3 from their 55 overs but they still lost by eight wickets thanks to Glamorgan captain Hugh Morris's unbeaten 143.

CHRIS SMITH 154*
(May 1990)

An opening stand of 252 with Paul Terry (134) helped Hampshire reach 297-2 from their 55 overs in this Benson & Hedges Cup group game at Northlands

Road.

Cardigan Connor (3-40) and Raj Maru (3-46) helped bowl out a Universities side captained by Mark Crawley, brother of John, and including opening batsmen Nick Knight and Steve James, for 198.

JASON LANEY 153
(June 1996)

Hampshire made 322-6 thanks to what remains the county's record opening partnership – 269 between Laney and captain John

Stephenson (107).

Norfolk lost the 60-over Natwest Trophy group game by 99 runs after being bowled out for 223, with Cardigan Connor (3-39) and Kevan James (3-46) doing the bulk of the damage with the ball.

MICHAEL CARBERRY 150*
(May 2013)

Carbs reached this landmark from only 115 balls with a cover-driven 18th four to clinch a nine-

wicket Yorkshire Bank 40 win against Lancashire under The Ageas Bowl floodlights.

After an opening stand of 77 with James Vince (25), he shared an unbroken 173 with fellow left-hander Jimmy Adams (66no) off the last 57 balls of the innings as Hampshire chased down 244. One of Carberry's five sixes dented a Sky Sports truck. "Apparently I'm getting the invoice later on," he laughed. Carberry made his one-day international debut a few months later.

MICHAEL CARBERRY 148*
(June 2012)

Scotland had no answer to the left-hander's 122-ball blitz, which included 20 fours and three sixes and secured a six-wicket win in the Clydesdale Bank 40 Trophy, a tournament Hampshire won at Lord's a few months later.

Partnerships of 106 with Simon Katich (41) and an unbroken 103 with Liam Dawson (27*) took Hampshire to their 231-run target with 23 balls to spare at The Ageas Bowl.

GLENN MAXWELL 146
(July 2014)

Batting at number three, the Aussie made his highest score for Hampshire as the county posted a record 360-9 in a Royal London One-Day Cup match against Lancashire at Old Trafford.

Hampshire's biggest limited-overs total remains their 371-4 against Glamorgan at Northlands Road in 1975.

But that was made in a 60 overs-a-side match. The Maxwell-inspired 360-9 is not far behind in second and took only 50 overs.

Maxwell hit 22 fours and two sixes and shared a third-wicket stand of 179 from 134 balls with Will Smith (49).

Lancashire were bowled out for 112 in reply.

GEORGE BAILEY 145*
(May 14, 2017)

It was an extraordinary effort from the Australian to keep Hampshire in the game after the county were reduced to 89-7 by Surrey at The Oval last week.

Bailey arrived at the crease with Hampshire 17-2 and soon lost James Vince, Liam Dawson, Sean Ervine, Lewis McManus and Gareth Berg.

Fortunately, he found a willing partner in Kyle Abbott (56), with whom he put on 152 in 25.4 overs to give Hampshire a chance with a total of 271-8.

Surrey won it by 66 runs (D/L) after reaching 238-2 from 38 overs when the rain arrived. But Bailey's first Hampshire century whetted the appetite for the start of his Hampshire captaincy career.

Afridi's best international displays

From facing page

He blasted 10 fours and nine sixes, hitting 102 of an opening stand of 131 with Salman Butt in 14.2 overs, to set the platform for a successful chase of 250 to beat India and seal a series comeback win with one game to spare.

June 2009

54 not out against Sri Lanka (T20I) at Lord's, June 21, 2009

Having struck a half-century and taken two for 16 during a narrow win over South Africa in the 2009 World Twenty20 semi-finals, Afridi steered his side to glory in the final at Lord's.

The leg-spinner was again economical with the ball, taking one wicket for just 20 runs in four overs, before guiding Pakistan home in their chase of 139 with 54 not out from 40 deliveries.



Shahid Afridi

The victory ended Afridi's wait for a major trophy with Pakistan after he played in the 1999 50-over World Cup final defeat to Australia and the inaugural World T20 showpiece loss against India in 2007.

July 2013

76 and seven for 12 against West Indies (ODI) in Guyana

Afridi produced arguably his best all-round performance for Pakistan in Guyana in 2013.

Not satisfied with a 55-ball 76 that propelled Pakistan to 224 for nine, the leg-spinner took the final seven wickets for just 12 runs in nine brilliant overs as the Windies were skittled for just 98.

● Don't miss the Sports Pink throughout the summer for coverage of Hampshire Cricket and the local cricket scene.

LOCAL CRICKET



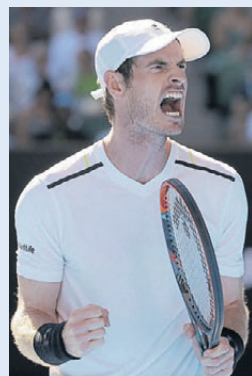
Worrying for Murray

Andy Murray's surprise second-round defeat to Fabio Fognini at the Italian Open this week continued a miserable start to the year for the British number one.

Here, the Sports Pink takes a closer look at Murray's worrying dip in form.

What's the big deal? - At the end of 2016 Murray looked set to become the sport's dominant force after winning five tournaments in a row and taking over as world number one. Novak Djokovic's inconsistency has continued but Murray has sunk into a slump of his own. He lost in the Australian Open last 16 to world number 50 Mischa Zverev before following that with shock defeats to Vasek Pospisil at Indian Wells, Albert Ramos-Vinolas in Monaco and Borna Coric in Madrid. He was beaten easily by Fognini 6-2 6-4.

Why has he lost form? - Murray's poor start to the year was initially put down to exhaustion after going deep in every tournament at the end of last season. And he took very little time off over Christmas,



Andy Murray

choosing instead to undergo a hard training camp with his coach Ivan Lendl. But fatigue cannot be the only factor. Murray appears also to be struggling for confidence as well as his usual sharpness of movement, so crucial to his success.

Is he still a contender at the French Open and Wimbledon? - On clay, Murray's results had improved dramatically and he should have been one of the favourites to win his first title at this year's French Open, which begins later this month. If he can find rhythm in time for the second week, he definitely has a chance, but a resurgent Nadal is the front-runner in an unusually open field. Murray's prospects at Wimbledon are better given grass suits his game so well and he will hope, at least, that by July he has rediscovered some of his groove.

Can Lendl save him? - Murray's partnership with Lendl is not full-time but the pair will reunite on Sunday and stay working together through the French Open. Lendl has shown an ability to lift Murray, both technically and psychologically, when his game has needed it most. Lendl's calming influence and straight-talking style could be just what the Briton needs right now.

Home advantage for Sparsholt and Park



Alex Ayers

Sparsholt and Titchborne Park will enjoy home advantage in the National Village Championship county semi-finals on Sunday week, May 28.

Paultons will be the visitors to the Norman Edwards round to play Sparsholt, while Titchborne receive Liphook & Ripsley.

Mike Howarth (71) and Jerry Frith (61) led Sparsholt to 217-7 (Tom Flynn 3-58) in their second round derby at the Quarters.

Hursley Park made 140-9, with newcomer Luke Deacon (31) top scoring. Fellow teen Nick Doubell took 3-25.

Paultons enjoyed a comfortable six-wicket win at Hambledon, who were Hampshire champions last season.

Spencer le Clerq's 53 underpinned

Hambledon's 140-8 (Andrew Denney 3-26), but an unbeaten 68 by Julian Drake steered Paultons home.

Titchborne Park successfully chased down Amport's 248-7 to win by three wickets and secure a semi-final tie with Liphook & Ripsley.

Alex Ayers, pictured, who was named Hampshire Under-15 player of the year last season, hit a superb 93 as Amport posted 248-7.

But Titchborne were home and dry with seven overs to spare, Martin Cheyney hitting a brutal 100 off 70 balls and dominating a 184-run start with Jake Bristow (51).

Tom Allam made 30 before Titchborne crossed the line.

Liphook & Ripsley breezed past Bramshaw, for whom Dave Streather (35) and Zane de Monte (27) top scored in a total of 164.

Rob Nicklin (3-32) and Giles Cover (3-33) shared the bowling plaudits for Liphook, who raced to victory with 11 overs to spare.

Nicklin (39) made runs at the start, while a partnership of 93 between Suman Ganguly (77) and Cover (44no) settled it.

Redlynch & Hale and Rowledge reached their respective county semi-finals without bowling a ball in anger. Redlynch will now play host to Goatacre, who whipped Parley (120) by nine wickets.

Rowledge host Surrey County League club Sinjungrammarians, from Tooting.

Levy makes great impact for 'Parish

Mike Vimpany



Former Locks Heath captain Jack Levy is proving quite a capture by Hampshire League County Division 1 new boys Longparish.

He underlined his all-round talents with a debut making 75 and 3-20 return against New Milton II.

Levy followed it up with a match winning show against fancied County 1 side Hook & Newnham Basics, scoring a key 75 down the order and then taking 5-19 with the ball.

Earlier, both Will de Cani and Tom Trinder made 34 as Parish's 219 proved well beyond Hook, who were never at the races once Alex Coetzee (2-11) and Levy began to make inroads. They were 125 all out.

Newly relegated Lymington have sprung from the traps in style - with Australian Billy Quigley making 102 as they chased down Hythe & Dibden's 201-9 (Tom Richards 84) to win by six wickets.

Ventnor, who came under a relentless assault from Lymington's double-century making Kiwi Terry Crabb (204) a week earlier, bounced back by taking the bragging rights in the all-Island duel with Ryde.

It did help that former first team captain Ian Hilsom was on the Island supporting the wonderful Walk the Wight charity event in aid of the Earl Mountbatten Hospice.

Hilsom marked his return with a 14-boundary 102 which, with support from Mark Price (47) and Hugh Calloway (46), sent Ventnor on their way to 249 all out.

Ben Wadmore, with a 4-43 return, and 83 with the bat did more than his fair share, but Ryde could only manage 167 in reply.

Alex Stogden clearly believes in leading from the front in his new role as Ropley captain, following up his unbeaten 123 against Burridge



Jack Levy

II with a rapid 78 off 45 balls in the 34-run defeat of St Cross Symondians III.

Ropley didn't start terribly well, but Tom Wood (74) and Alex Spencer

(55) put on 83 for the third wicket.

The next 13 overs produced 131, Stogden smashing his quick-fire 78, with 26 runs coming off one over!

Pranay Rathod (4-47) and Tom Fay

(3-29) clawed it back for St Cross, who were asked to better 276.

Ropley weren't so good in the field, an erratic display of out-cricket coinciding with Steve Berryman (76) and Fay (57) responding well and making it a tighter contest than they anticipated. St Cross Symondians closed 242-9.

Title favourites Portsmouth & Southsea thought they were in for an easy ride when Jon Willey (4-13) and Kieron Dunstan (3-15) rolled Rowledge II out for 104.

But with their reply in tatters at 41-6, P & S pair Tom Benfield (41) and Jake Peach (23) turned the tide and eased their side to a four-wicket win.

Bishops Waltham lost seven wickets chasing down a modest Burridge II total of 146 (Dan Wheeler 3-33), the hosts being 17-3 at one stage.

Suji Wickramasinghe (31) and William Candy (36) led a middle-order recovery, but Andy Wakeley (3-26) ripped through the tail.

Adam Wymbs (35) top scored in BW's reply, which was aided by 36 sundries.

Burridge have now lost twice, so this weekend's match up with winless Fareham & Crofton promises to be significant as the three-time losers will have an uphill survival scrap on their hands.

Fareham (158) are having difficulty in scoring runs, with only Sam Stoddart (53) making any impression in the eight-wicket defeat by OTs & Romsey II, for whom Paul Longland (51) and Ian Woodall (71) led the way.

United Services were front runners in CD1 last term, but their poor end of season form has continued, with a second consecutive defeat by New Milton II.

Gary Hounscome (51) and Tom May (49) shared a decent middle-order stand, but New Milton eased past the US total of 217-8 by five wickets with Ollie Nichols hitting an unbeaten 63.

LOCAL CRICKET



Evegreen Nick celebrates five-wicket haul



Nick Gregaro.

Evergreen New Milton left-arm swing bowler Nick Gargaro could be excused for having a good old knee's up after his match winning five-wicket haul against Burridge last week.

His 5-45 return, alongside teenager Oli Shrubsole's 4-28, sent Burridge into freefall and won a remarkable ECB British Gas Southern Premier Division match for the Green & Golds.

It was his first serious bowl since having his left knee replaced last summer.

Defending 238-5, New Milton's prospects of building on the previous week's win over the Hampshire Academy looked unlikely as Jamie Richards (56) and former Hampshire batsman Derek Kenway (50) steered the Burridge reply 125-0.

But an extraordinary collapse saw Burridge lose all ten wickets for 41 runs – and the match by a 72-run margin!

Ironically, Gargaro's nine-over spell didn't begin that well.

"My initial two overs cost 28 runs, so I

decided to mix it up and bowl cutters – and that seemed to do the trick," Gargaro laughed.

"At 52 years of age, it was odd having to get used to bowling with a complete different white ball."

Gargaro, a key member of the Hampshire Over-50s bowling attack, under went major knee surgery last June, having played only four Premier Division matches for New Milton, then newly promoted as 2015 SPL1 champions.

"Ironically, I jarred calf muscle playing in the Academy match and managed only two overs.

"But the knee is really good. It's been a tough time since the replacement op, with many hours of physio and in the gym.

"But I got back in the nets around Christmas time and had the great incentive to get fully fit for the England Seniors tour to Cape Town, which I went on in March," he explained.

New Milton skipper Ryan Beck also praised Milton's overseas batsman Dave

Wakefield and teenager spinner Oli Shrubsole, who joined the Fernhill club from Parley last summer.

Wakefield didn't have the best of debut seasons in 2016, his only two scores of significance – 56 and 87 coming against arch rivals Bashley (Rydal).

But carrying his bat for 95 against Burridge proved pivotal to New Milton's success.

"I wanted Dave back in front of any other overseas options as he's a massive heart and is someone us sloggers can bat around," Beck said.

Beck also praised teenager Oli Shrubsole, who kickstarted the Burridge slide when he clean bowled Derek Kenway.

Shrubsole, who journeys from Wareham, came up through Parley's envied colts set up and carved a niche for himself in the team last summer.

"Oli's was a very mature spell of bowling. He's a future captain, I've no doubt, with his attitude and nous."

Joe's chance to shine

Shane Warne expects new captain Joe Root to change the way England play Test cricket.

Root will lead England out for the first time at Lord's on July 6 against South Africa, and former Hampshire skipper Warne believes Alastair Cook's successor will imbue his team from the outset with attacking intent.

All-time great Warne was a notable critic of Cook in the early stages of the opener's record-breaking stint as captain.

And although he concedes improvements did come, the former Australia leg-spinner still anticipates Root's style will be a whole new ball game.

Asked about Root's likely approach to his high-profile new job, Warne said: "He has a bit more flair than Alastair Cook."

Basing his opinion on the Yorkshireman's pro-active attitude to batting in all formats, he added: "Alastair Cook had a lot of strengths... (but) I think (Root) will be a lot different tactically."

Even towards the very end of Cook's national-record 59 Tests as captain, in the 4-0 series defeat



Shane Warne.

against India last winter, Warne saw evidence that old habits were dying hard.

"Even recently in India, England had a great chance to win that first Test but batted too long," he said.

"That's been a bit of a sign with England, where they've just batted a bit too long (so) they can't lose the game.

"I hope Root will be a little bit more: 'We're going to try and win this.'"

"Alastair Cook got better – no one is their best version of themselves as captain when they start.

"I was very critical of Alastair at the start because he wasn't making a run either, and I didn't think he captained the side that well. But that was three or four years ago.

"I hope Root will be a little bit more aggressive and try and win games, rather than make sure they don't lose them."

Warne expects England's coaches to allow him the freedom to follow his instincts.

"It will bring the best out in him, he will enjoy it. I'm excited to see the way he (does it)," the 47-year-old said.

"He's aggressive, and takes the game on – he likes to be positive all of the time – so I hope that rubs off in his captaincy.

"It's his chance to shine."

Pack 'mad keen' to impress - Park

Mike
Vimpany



SKIPPER Chris Park is backing his multi-faceted bowling attack to continue wreaking havoc as Bournemouth seek to extend their victorious start to the British Gas Southern Premier League season.

Teenage spinner Rob Pack, who is "mad keen" to impress this season according to Park, tore through Portsmouth with five wickets in the thumping 69-run win last week, having opened the campaign by snaring three victims in a 97-run trouncing of Rowledge.

On that occasion, it was fellow left-arm spinner Dom Clutterbuck who did most of the damage with a match-defining haul of five for 17.

With a rich fast-bowling armoury at his disposal, too, Park admits there is little room for sentiment in the outfield.

"We are lucky to have seven or eight bowling options. If one of them is having an off day, or a bad spell, I have to be ruthless and make a change immediately.

"Rob Pack did not have a great pre-season, he had to miss three of the four friendlies because of work. Coming into the season, he has been mad keen to do well.

"But the wickets have been shared around. Dom Clutter-



Bournemouth bowler Rob Pack. Pic by Denis Murphy.

buck's five-for changed the game against Rowledge, then he bought a wicket at Portsmouth as well.

"We are heavily dominated by our spin bowling and we still have Jem Warner to come back from Durham University.

"In club cricket, spin does dominate. A lot of batsmen's eyes light up when they see the slow bowlers. But these three are good quality spinners, they have bowled a lot of overs through the years, so there is an awful lot of experience

there, despite their ages.

"And we have a strong seam attack, as well. Chrystian Michalowski and Chris Bolton are missing at the moment.

"But Simon Woodruff (who has joined the club from Wimborne & Colehill) and Matt Jones, the two opening bowlers, were absolutely superb at Portsmouth and probably won us the game."

The only slight blot on Lions' promising start to the Division One campaign has been their inability to put an imposing total on the board.

Park's team did well to score 206 on a 'minefield' at Portsmouth, but the captain was disappointed with the 217 they set Rowledge for victory on the opening day.

"As a batting side, we want to get to 250," said Park. "You will never play a perfect game but the lads have applied themselves exceptionally well, the intensity has been great and we have had two good results.

"Cricket is a simple game. If our batsmen score runs and the bowlers take wickets, we will win a lot of games. It is down to the top six or seven to score those runs.

"We bat very deeply but we can't take things for granted. We have to be on the money in every game."

● Bournemouth host Burridge at Chapel Gate on Sunday (1pm) for a place in the regional semi-final of the ECB Royal London national club championship at Normandy on June 4.

A perfect response

Lewis Hamilton is six points behind Sebastian Vettel in the race for the title after beating the German in an epic Spanish Grand Prix.

Hamilton delivered the perfect response to his off-colour performance in Russia to record his second victory of the season.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at five things we learned from a fascinating race.

1. Mercedes play the team game

Hamilton's victory in Barcelona could prove to be pivotal in a championship battle with Vettel which has all the hallmarks of a classic. And while Hamilton will take the plaudits for his second win of the season, and the 55th of his quite remarkable career, it is his Mercedes team who deserve plenty of credit, too. Their quick-thinking ploy to pit Hamilton in the closing moments of the virtual safety car period caught Ferrari on the backfoot and enabled the Brit to slash a near-eight second deficit to Vettel in the blink of an eye. Hamilton's ensuing overtake on Vettel clinched a remarkable fightback and ensured the triple world champion will arrive in Monaco six points shy of Vettel rather than 20.

2. Is friendly rivalry



Lewis Hamilton

on the wane?

Hamilton's relationship with Vettel has been notable for its lack of animosity, but the first real on-track battle of their rivalry suggested that it may not last. Indeed the two drivers disagreed over whether they left each other enough room as they dived for the lead and Hamilton was forced off the track. "I gave you space, otherwise we would have touched," Hamilton said. Vettel sitting alongside the Briton jumped in. "I thought I gave you space, too." "Not really," Hamilton replied. "You definitely didn't give me much space." Vettel hit back. "We're still here," he said before Hamilton had the last word. "Yeah, just." While the exchange was light-hearted, one wonders if Hamilton would have been quite so chipper had he not won.

3. More doom for McLaren

Fernando Alonso headed straight for America as he embarks on his Indianapolis 500 quest. But while the Spaniard will take some heart from reaching the chequered flag in 12th to record his first finish of the season, it was a lacklustre afternoon given he qualified seventh.

Cont on facing page

It's the biggest



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PINK

Raid of all time

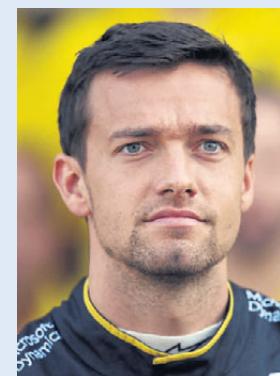


from facing page

Indeed after Pascal Wehrlein registered Sauber's first points of the season, McLaren are now propping up the constructors' championship on nul points. There was worse news for Stoffel Vandoorne who was handed a three-place grid penalty for Monaco after he crashed into Felipe Massa and retired.

4. Post-Bernie Ecclestone era taking shape

The opening leg of the European season marked the first in which Liberty Media's blueprint on the sport was evident. The American giants have faced criticism for making few changes to a formula they acquired from CVC Capital Partners in January and was spearheaded by Bernie Ecclestone for the last four decades. But here in Barcelona, the top-three drivers, and home favourite Alonso, were interviewed on the start-finish straight immediately after qualifying before firing t-shirts into



Jolyon Palmer.

the crowd. The paddock was noticeably busier, with a Heineken bar set up for its VIP guests, while a giant robot paraded in front of the team's hospitality suites before the race, too. The young Kimi Raikkonen fan, who was seen crying on television after the Ferrari driver crashed out, was also plucked from the stands to meet his hero. It is hard to imagine such a scenario would have taken place under Ecclestone's regime.

5. Pressure on

British driver Jolyon Palmer is just five races into his second season with Renault, but it seems highly unlikely he will be retained for a third year, or indeed survive the campaign, if his current form does not improve. Palmer finished last of all the classified runners in Barcelona after qualifying a lowly 17th. His team-mate Nico Hulkenberg meanwhile, finished sixth.

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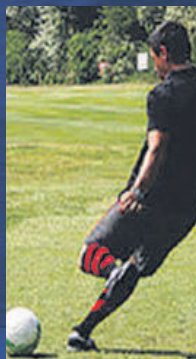
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PINK

Eddie could end up as top English boss

With the Premier League title and relegation already decided, there is only Champions League qualification to play for in the final weekend's matches. Or is there?

Here, Tom White unearths a (perhaps tenuous) reason to pay attention to each of Sunday's games.

Arsenal v Everton

Arsenal's midweek win over Sunderland kept them in the Champions League picture, meaning they can displace Liverpool or possibly Manchester City with a win. A draw could be enough if Liverpool lose by at least two goals at home to relegated Middlesbrough. Everton are set in the Europa League but Romelu Lukaku needs to respond to Tottenham's Harry Kane moving two clear in the Golden Boot race.

Burnley v West Ham

Almost equally significant, the Turf Moor clash will determine who is the best team in claret and blue - Burnley, on 40 points, need a win to overtake the Hammers (42).

Chelsea v Sunderland

Victory for Chelsea would be a record 30th in a Premier League season, breaking their own mark from the first two years of Jose Mourinho's initial reign as manager in 2004-05 and 2005-06. The record even encompasses the competition's early years after rebranding, when the season comprised 42 games rather than 38. Even if they lose, they will finish with more wins this season than Sunderland have points.

Hull v Tottenham

After scoring four against Leicester, Kane will be out to add to his 26 league goals and make it impossible for Lukaku to deny him top-scorer honours. If Hull can sign off with a win after being condemned to relegation, it would equal their highest top flight points total of 37 set in 2013-14.

Leicester v Bournemouth

A massive game for both teams as they battle for the accolade of highest-placed English manager.



Craig Shakespeare, left, and Cherries boss Eddie Howe.

Victory for Craig Shakespeare will give him the bragging rights over Eddie Howe as his side will finish 10th, one place ahead of the Cherries. It would also avoid Leicester becoming the first Premier League champions to finish the following season in the bottom half.

Liverpool v Middlesbrough

Actual footballing consequences riding on this one, with Liverpool needing a win to make sure of their Champions League place. Relegated Boro have the fewest wins and goals in the top flight this season, but have the chance to catch Sunderland on both fronts with the Black Cats just one ahead.

Manchester United v Crystal Palace

United will finish sixth and are entirely focused on the Europa League final, so what is at stake

here is good old-fashioned cash - each place in the final table is worth a reported £1.9million in additional prize money and Palace can finish anywhere from 11th to, technically, 17th (although Swansea's poor goal difference makes that unlikely). The match, therefore, is worth a potential £11.4m to them - roughly what they paid for midfielder Luka Milivojevic.

Saints v Stoke

After the European places, everybody wants to be best of the rest, right? Right? Fans of eighth-placed Saints will be nervously biting their nails to see if their side can hold off West Brom, Bournemouth and theoretically Leicester for the prestigious honour. If they can, it would be the fourth year running Saints have finished in the top eight - something the club has never ever managed to do. Stoke, on the same points total as Palace, are therefore playing

for approximately one Xherdan Shaqiri's worth of transfer funds.

Swansea v West Brom

Howe and Shakespeare may top the English managers table, but West Brom's Welsh boss Tony Pulis still occupies top spot as far as Britain is concerned and will need a result to hold on to that spot. Paul Clement, with survival assured, could still move above Burnley's Sean Dyche in the standings as well.

Watford v Manchester City

A point would rubber-stamp City's Champions League spot and most likely direct passage to the group stage, although if Liverpool rack up the goals then a win may be required to keep hold of third place.

Watford have lost five in a row - another would see Walter Mazzarri end his reign by matching Hull and Palace for the season's worst losing run.



Bilic eyes the top six

Slaven Bilic has targeted a top-six finish for West Ham next season as he bids to end the current campaign on a positive note.

The Hammers manager has admitted he enjoyed last season more than this one as his side aim to end an eventful campaign with some good news.

After finishing seventh last term - one place behind Saints - the Hammers are likely to end this one in the bottom half as they travel to Burnley on the final day of the Premier League campaign.

West Ham have endured a topsy-turvy season which has seen crowd trouble at the London Stadium and the departure of star man Dimitri Payet in January.

Bilic is set to meet co-owner David Sullivan on Monday and the Hammers boss revealed the club have their sights set on breaking into the top six.

Bilic said: "The ambitions are - the minimum (is) to finish in the top 10, but with the hope or plan to break into the top eight, top seven or top six."

"It's going to be very hard, you saw last year that it is possible but you have to tick all of the boxes, you have to have a good transfer window, stay out of injuries and we settle down in the stadium."

"It's not going to be blooming and glooming all of the time but we feel it's our home. We had some really good performances and some really bad performances there."

"This should all help us being better next season, knowing that all the other teams will do the same."

The Croatian's future has come under scrutiny in recent months but Bilic feels that his current squad will only benefit from their struggles.

When asked if he has enjoyed this season, the West Ham manager answered: "Make no mistake, I enjoyed last season more than this one."

"You know it's not enjoyable during that (tough) period but after that you become stronger, not only as a manager or not only as an individual player but you are building the character of the team."



Slaven Bilic

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